
EVOLUTION *of* CHRISTIANITY

F. G. SMITH



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EVOLUTION OF CHRISTIANITY

or

Origin, Nature, and Development
Of the Religion of the Bible

revised by
By
F. G. SMITH

Author of "The Revelation Explained"

"Religion's all. Descending from the skies
To wretched man, the goddess in her left
Holds out this world,
And, in her right, the next."
—Young.

"Thou shalt guide me with thy council, and afterward
~~receive~~ me to glory." *Psa.* 73: 24.

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PREFACE.

Believers in Christianity usually appeal to the Bible as the source of authority for their religion. Such appeal is all that is essential wherever the divine Authorship of the Bible is recognized. In the present work, however, I have dealt with the subject of revealed religion from the standpoint of man's moral and mental necessities, showing his need of divine illumination, and arriving at the conclusion that CHRISTIANITY is the only religion adapted to his requirements and must therefore be the true religion and the *only successful religion* for the moral elevation and redemption of mankind. Contrasted with all other forms of religion, Christianity, because of its beautiful nature and marvelous success, is in a class by itself, thus clearly demonstrating the fact that it proceeded from a source higher than human.

I have endeavored to show that there has, from the earliest period, been a constant unfolding and developing of the religion of the Bible in accordance with a prearranged plan. That such a revelation from God to man was essential was made clear by a consideration of the natural constitution of man himself. As this revelation increased from age to age, the record of its progress was written by living witnesses, and thus we have our

Bible, the Book of Life for the world. So, after all, the authority for the Christian religion lies, not in the Bible itself as a book, but in the *source from which the Bible came*. "For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

The beneficial effect of revealed religion is shown by the mental and the moral elevation of mankind wherever the Bible has gone with its message of mercy. By imposing wholesome restraints upon human pride and selfishness true religion has conserved the natural energies of man and contributed powerfully toward the refining, purifying, and elevating results manifested in the highest type of modern civilization. Let the work of evangelizing the world with the pure religion of Jesus go forward!

"Thou whose Almighty word
Chaos and darkness heard,
And took their flight,
Hear us, we humbly pray;
And, where the gospel day
Sheds not its glorious ray,
'Let there be light!'"

Yours in the interest of the Truth,

F. G. Smith.

Grand Junction, Mich., Oct. 1, 1910.

INTRODUCTION.

Christianity is a mighty factor in the history of world-progress. Believing her origin to be divine, and fully convinced of the truth and justice of her claims, millions have arrayed themselves under her banner; and every passing year multitudes still join her ranks. Exclusive in her claims and opposed to every principle of human selfishness, she has successfully fought her way against contending rivals and the antagonizing forces of evil men, and today she stands crowned triumphant—the most brilliant example of endurance and of glory in the entire history of religious phenomena. Whence came this wondrous moral force?—from heaven, or from men? To consider the origin, the nature, and the development of this religion of the Bible is the object of the present work.

Man possesses a religious nature. He intuitively desires to worship something. This has been his uniform experience in all countries and in all ages. It is on account of this universality of religious sentiment that philosophers have applied to man the generic appellation “the religious animal.” But his conception of spirit-powers and of divine worship, independent of direct revela-

tion, has been crude and oftentimes grotesquely absurd, varying, in accordance with the state of his intellectual development, from the lowest fetichism to a semi-ethical anthropomorphic polytheism, with some traces, perhaps, of monotheistic ideas.

But while universal experience establishes the fact that man is by nature religious, universal testimony also acknowledges him to be a sinful being morally accountable to a higher power. However, many nations have preserved traditions of a former period of holiness and happiness. Thus, we read in the Chinese books that "during the period of the first heaven, the whole creation enjoyed a state of happiness: everything was beautiful; everything was good; all beings were perfect in their kind. In this happy age, heaven and earth employed their virtues jointly to embellish nature. There was no jarring in the elements, no inclemency in the air; all things grew without labor, and universal fertility prevailed. The active and the passive virtues conspired together, without any effort or opposition, to produce and perfect the universe."¹ The Chaldean traditions of the primeval state—the sacred tree, its guardian cherubs, and flaming sword—strikingly

¹ Faber's *Horae Mosaicae*, p. 146, as quoted by Rawlinson.

resemble the Hebrew account.² The story of the fall of man is preserved in Thibetan, Mongolian, and Cingalese traditions, and the account given in some of the Persian books closely resembles the Scriptural narrative.³ But the religious aspirations of man, independent of divine revelation, have ever been merely the longing of the infant crying in the night for its food.

Turning to the Bible, we find not only an account of the primitive fall and man's subsequent sinful condition, but also, during the ages, increasing evidences of a plan for his restoration. Now, that plan must of necessity be divine in order to be successful. Man could not redeem himself; for, having been originally placed under a law that required perfect obedience and love for God with all the heart and soul, he could have no surplus obedience to make reparation for the sins that were past. Therefore works of supererogation were clearly impossible. The broken law of obedience could not be set aside; its infinite dignity and majesty had to be vindicated by the enforcement of its penalties. No created intelligence could secure man's redemption; for the fact of creatureship implies dependence and obliga-

² See George Smith's Chaldean Account of Genesis, 1876.

³ Kalisch, Comment on Genesis, p. 63.

tion. Even the angels of heaven were under the same law exacting perfect obedience, and hence they could have no surplus righteousness to atone for fallen man. Only a being over whom the law had no jurisdiction was adequate to such a task, and therefore only God could redeem. After predictions by prophets and typical foreshadowing by many of the ceremonies of Moses' law, "when the fulness of the time was come, *God sent forth his Son*, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." Gal. 4:4, 5.

Although this plan of salvation was perfect and complete in the mind and purpose of God from the beginning, its full revelation to mankind was reserved until the incarnation of Christ. Therefore the apostle Paul refers to it as a "mystery which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God" (Eph. 3:9), "even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: to whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory." Col. 1:26, 27. But looking backward upon the history of God's dealings with his people in olden times, we can

now discern clearly that throughout the ages there was a gradual unfolding of the divine purposes which was destined to reach its climax of moral development in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

The original promise of victory over the serpent that had been the means of Eve's seduction (Gen. 3:15), given to her in the Garden, is an allusion to a future Redeemer. That God regarded mankind is further shown by the statements that he "had respect unto Abel" (Gen. 4:4), that "Enoch walked with God" (Gen. 5:22), and that "Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord." Gen. 6:8. At a later date the divine plan received a marvelous unfolding to Abraham, so that he was able to see not only the great preparatory revelation which was to be given his literal descendants, but also the grand permanent structure of the gospel system, through which all the families of the earth should be blessed. Christ himself declared, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad." John 8:56. To the prophet Isaiah was made known the fact that God himself would effect the salvation of men (Isa. 35:4) and that it would be accomplished by his suffering and vicarious death. Isa. 53. Daniel was assured that the Messiah would come "to finish the transgres-

sion, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness." Dan. 9:24, 25.

Many of the materials that Christ employed in the formation of the gospel system had been made ready to his hand in the preparatory course of instruction that had been given the Jewish people in order to pave the way for the advent of the Messiah and for the reception of his teachings. C. P. Tiele has said that "every religion coming to the front on the stage of history is rooted in the past, has been fostered, so to speak, by one or more of its predecessors, and can not be maintained without taking up and assimilating the still-living elements of the old faith."¹ This witness is right; but we can only affirm the truth of the statement with reference to its bearing on the establishment of Christianity, for the details are too numerous to be discussed here. However, regarding Christianity as the outgrowth or result of a prearranged plan that had been in process of unfolding through all the ages, I have entitled the present work, which deals with its origin, nature, and development, **THE EVOLUTION OF CHRISTIANITY**. Thus, we apply in a sense the later designation of divinely re-

¹ Encyclopedia Britannica, Ninth Ed., Art., Religions.

vealed religion to the entire process of its development. Such use of language, however, is not uncommon. We read that *General* Washington was born in 1732, but the real meaning is that the person who afterwards became the General was born in that year. So, also, when we speak of the transformations of the butterfly, we refer particularly to the process by which it developed into a butterfly—passing from the larval condition into the chrysalid form and thence into the perfect state.

Evolution signifies literally the act of unrolling or unfolding. Le Conte defines the term as “progressive change according to certain laws.”² George Sexton says: “What does the word mean, and whence is it borrowed? It means to unfold from within; and it is taken from the history of the seed or embryo of living natures. And what is the seed but a casket of prearranged futurities, with its whole contents perspective, settled to be what they are by reference to ends still in the distance?”³ While these definitions were given with reference to the doctrine of natural evolution, they nevertheless convey the proper

² *Evolution and its Relation to Religious Thought*, p. 8.

³ *Baseless Fabric of Scientific Skepticism* (London, 1879), p. 36.

idea of the meaning of the term—a constant unfolding according to a fixed method.

The norm of the redemption plan was not reached, however, in apostolic times; for the divine system of restoration is still unfolding, and its length, and breadth, and depth, and height will not be fully known until the end of time, “when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality.” 1 Cor. 15:54. The golden age of the Christian lies not in the dim, distant past, but in the future; and already we seem to see the faint glimpse of the roseate dawn which will usher in the bright splendors of that glorious, everlasting day.

“Is there evil but on earth,
Or pain in every peopled sphere?
Well, be grateful for the sounding watchword,
Evolution here.”

—Tennyson.

But natural evolution, morally speaking, has usually been evolution downwards; and it has devolved upon Christianity to supply that power of righteousness which exalteth the nations. Wherever the gospel of Christ has been preached, its principles have been gradually diffused, like leaven, throughout the whole mass of society, and

they have been the most potent factor in elevating mankind and producing the highest state of civilization.

This progressive feature of the gospel was recognized in a beautiful comparison which a certain minister recently used while in conversation with the writer, given in about the following words: "Christianity is not, as many suppose, a polished diamond let down from heaven to earth, which shines brilliantly and undimmed in any part of the world; but *it is a seed* which requires planting and good soil." In other words, the moral principles of righteousness implanted in the heart, like seed, have a gradual development. And this feature of Christianity is full of beauty and wisdom; for it is thus applicable to men in all conditions of life and in every stage of intellectual development.

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MAN'S
MENTAL AND MORAL
CONSTITUTION.

Evolution of Christianity.

CHAPTER I.

THE RELIGIOUS NATURE.

A system of revelation or of religion purporting to be of divine origin can be established only by the proof of its adaptation to the needs and the requirements of the human race. Every religion of man claims authority of some kind for its propagation; but if it is deficient in ethics, if it entertains unphilosophical or groveling ideas of the supernatural, or if it stands committed to a false cosmogony, it is sure to be left behind in the progress of intellectual development. A divine revelation must therefore accord with the needs of humanity in all ages of the world. Without discussing here the matter of the giving of such a revelation, we will proceed to consider the subject of MAN'S MENTAL AND MORAL CONSTITUTION, as a necessary basis for the future consideration of the divine plan brought to light in the Bible.

Man is by nature a religious being. This is shown, in the first place, by the universality of religious phenomena. Winchell defines religion

as "the feeling of the existence of the All Cause, and of his inevitable grasp upon us, and paternal interest in us."¹ And Dr. Cocker styles it, "A mode of thought, of feeling, and of action determined by the consciousness of our relations to God."² It is certain that the entire human family has experienced "the feeling of the existence of the All Cause," as a result of which men have devised modes "of thought, of feeling, and of action" for his worship in accordance with their intellectual state. This belief in a grand First Cause, or Deity, has led mankind in all ages to form many systems of worship; and these religions bear in common the ideas of man's sinfulness, of his moral accountability to a higher power, of future rewards and punishments, of supplication, of a revelation either in visible external things or in a body of sacred writings, and of a priesthood whose duty it is to administer the ceremonies of their religion, and who are regarded as possessing superior authority. James Freeman Clarke's celebrated work, "Ten Great Religions of the World," impresses the mind with the prevalence of religious belief; while Alexander Winchell enumerates twelve great systems which, he

1 Reconciliation of Science and Religion, p. 327.

2 Theistic Conception of the World, p. 345.

affirms, have dominated over nine-tenths of the population of the globe.¹

But we are not to suppose that the remaining tenth of the world's population are without religion; they have their own forms of worship independent of the major systems referred to. It is true that in a few cases travelers have reported certain tribes of savages to be without any religion; but subsequent investigation has generally corrected the first statement, by showing that the tribes had customs and observances which could be traced directly to religious sentiments, but which, because of their peculiar nature or extreme repulsiveness to the enlightened missionary or traveler, were regarded as the negation of all religion, on account of their utter non-conformity to all our ideals of true worship. The author last quoted says that he has carefully investigated the condition of every tribe reported to be without religion, and he asserts that there are but three tribes known to him that can be fairly represented as destitute of religious sentiments—"the Andamaners, the Gran Chacos of South America, and the Arafuras of Vorkay."² This insignificant mi-

¹ Reconciliation of Science and Religion, pp. 185-187.

² Ibid., pp. 20, 189.

nority, however, does not represent the normal state of humanity.

Whence originated this living principle of faith which has actuated all mankind? Can it be accounted for on the ground asserted by Burton and Euhemerus—that it is a feeling of veneration for ancestors and for the wise and good, that has come down to us? No. Will the explanation given by certain of the ancients, Pyrrho, Critias, and others—that faith was originated by such men as those who peopled Olympus with divinities in order to enforce the laws of the state and of society—be sufficient? By no means. Such theories can hardly account for the universal prevalence of religious belief, and they utterly fail to furnish a rational explanation of the powerful hold religion has on the minds and the hearts of all men. No other thing has exercised such a controlling influence over the race, the lowest savages being entirely subject to its lordly sway, and the proudest and loftiest philosophers not exempted from its power. It is humanity longing for God. Well has Richard Trench said, “No one but God can satisfy the longings of an immortal soul; that as the heart was made for him, so he only can fill it.”

Nor can the phenomenon of general religious

sentiments be satisfactorily explained on the single ground that it is a deduction of the universal reason; for it bears no quantitative or qualitative relation to human experience or to the intelligence, being as strong in the primitive uncivilized man as it is in the man of highest intellectual attainments.

And, finally, I wish to deny that it grows out of a superstitious fear of invisible powers, as expressed in the poem of Lucretius, and maintained by Dupuis, Conte, Hobbes, Buchner, and others. It is possible that such superstition might be an incentive to some form of worship in order to appease the wrath of the imaginary gods; but if religion had no other foundation, it would be impossible for it long to survive the combined assaults of the baser passions of men, which most religions seek in some degree at least to check, and of the developing intellect. In the development of the perceptive and reflective powers the phenomena of nature impress the mind with the fact that the Governor of the universe is not capricious and revengeful in the administration of her laws, for everywhere order, symmetry, beauty, design, and beneficence are manifest; and this knowledge invariably relieves the mind of that "superstitious fear" which characterizes the lower classes of society. But if the basis of religion is

no more than such a primitive superstition, then the advance of human knowledge will certainly undermine the foundation; and we can therefore determine the distance of our removal from the savage state by measuring the intensity of the religious sentiment we still possess. Universal experience at the present day, however, testifies conclusively that the necessity of religion is still upon us, and throughout all the ages the greatest intellects and profoundest thinkers have felt constrained to yield to the mandates of this higher controlling influence. Again the question comes, Whence does this power proceed?

We take the affirmative and maintain that the universal prevalence of religious sentiments and of systems of worship is due to the facts that *man possesses a religious nature*, that he intuitively feels the divine presence, and that, therefore, these lofty aspirations and longings after God arise spontaneously in the human soul. Do we hold that a principle of morality inheres in human nature? Most assuredly, the general answer comes. And the ground for this assertion is the fact that all men are conscious of some standard of right and wrong, and that they ought to conform to the right. Do we maintain that man possesses an intellectual nature? The evidence for

our affirmative assertion lies in the fact that it is clearly proved to be a general characteristic of humanity. Now, religion is clearly shown to be a characteristic of the entire race; and therefore this universal belief, experience, and consciousness of mankind testifies unmistakably to an innate religious nature.

The heart-touching story related by Casalis, the African traveler, illustrates beautifully this universal longing of humanity for God. Arbrousset the missionary had been explaining the gospel message to one of the savage Kafirs. He replied: "Your tidings are what I want; and I was seeking before I knew you, as you shall hear and judge for yourselves. Twelve years ago I went to feed my flocks. The weather was hazy. I sat down upon a rock and asked myself sorrowful questions; yes, sorrowful, because I was unable to answer them. 'Who has touched the stars with his hands? On what pillars do they rest?' I asked myself. 'The waters are never weary; they know no other law but to flow, without ceasing, from morning till night, and from night till morning; but where do they stop? and who makes them flow thus? The clouds, also, come and go, and burst in water over the earth. Whence come they? The diviners certainly do

not give us rain, for how could they do it? and why do I not see them with mine eyes, when they go up to heaven to fetch it? I can not see the wind; but what is it? Who brings it, makes it blow, and roar, and terrify us? Do I know how the corn sprouts? Yesterday there was not a blade in my field; today I returned to the field and found some. Who can have given to the earth the wisdom and the power to produce it? Then I buried my face in both my hands."

We must not overlook the unimpeachable character of fundamental intuitions. The chief effort of philosophers during the ages has been to reduce truth to the basis of primitive ideas; and beyond that foundation we can not pass, unless, indeed, we follow the example of Fitch and deny all possibility of obtaining any knowledge whatever and float out into an airy nothingness, a confused realm of fantastic images. But every sane thinker is conscious that there are reliable ideas of a fundamental nature which neither require nor are capable of proof, as they constitute the very foundation of all knowledge and truth. It is said of Archimedes, the Grecian mathematician, that he required only one fixed point, and he would be able to move the world. So, also, Descartes, the great French philosopher, desirous of finding one

unquestionable principle from which to start, discovered it in the fact of *self-existence*. That was a principle which to him neither required nor was capable of proof—for it was primitive—and still it could not be doubted. Whatever else might be surrounded with doubts, he could not doubt that he himself existed. That fundamental truth he must accept as a *reality*.¹

In considering the subject of intuitions, however, we must be careful to determine which are really primitive. The usual rule to govern our decision is universality and necessity. If it can be shown that an idea is coextensive with the race or that it is absolutely necessary by all the known laws governing human thought, then we may accept it as an innate concept corresponding to a reality, and its validity can not rightly be questioned.

This argument from "common consent" is no new one. Alexander of Aphrodisias, we are told, "ascribed great authority to widely prevalent beliefs," "since," he asserts, "mankind generally do not greatly err from the truth." Cicero affirms that "in any matter whatever the consent of all nations is to be reckoned a law of nature."¹ This

¹ Ueberweg's History of Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 41.
¹ Tuscul, I 13.

idea is sustained by the ablest writers of all ages, among whom may be mentioned Socrates, Plato, Paul, Augustine, Descartes, Leibnitz, Barrow, Butler, Calderwood, and Spencer.

Now, in order that the reader may better understand the binding character of these primitive beliefs which bear the consent of all men without proof being required, we will refer to a few. In the case of Descartes, already referred to, the idea of the real existence of *self* was presented with all the force and convincing authority of a native belief. But while every individual is intuitively conscious of self, he is also conscious of something that is *not self*, something that is spontaneously conceived to be real substantial existence; and therefore the idea of *externality*, being a universal and necessary concept of the human mind, may be set down as a fundamental intuition whose authority can not be questioned. So certain is every man of the existence of an external world that all his thoughts and actions are predicated upon its reality. Time and again his developing intellect may force him to acknowledge that he has been mistaken in regard to many things in the visible world; that the operations of nature are not just what he has supposed them to be. So he devises another explanation for the

manifestation of material phenomena, which in turn may require revision at a later date. But amid all the changes one idea is unquestionable, is abiding, *is fundamental*—there is a real external world. Such axioms as the following are universal, primitive beliefs; hence they require no proof: “The whole must be equal to the sum of all its parts.” “It is impossible for a thing to exist and yet not exist at the same time.” Space and time are also primitive concepts. “The ground of a primary belief,” says Alexander Winchell, “is neither testimony, nor authority, nor sensuous observation, nor inductive inference, nor deductive consequence. It is a ground more unassailable than any of these. It is a directness and a singleness of intuition of one transcendental and eternal truth.”¹

Cicero long ago declared that “there is no people so wild and savage as not to have believed in a God, even if they have been unacquainted with his nature.” We have already shown the universality of religious practises founded upon that primitive belief arising spontaneously in the human soul—the belief in a higher power to which man is morally accountable.

Now, applying the well-established principle of

1 Reconciliation of Science and Religion, p. 307.

the authority of fundamental intuitions to this subject of religious phenomena, what results do we obtain? Does this native belief in a God answer to a living reality? And is this universal longing of humanity for association with the Most High a lie stamped on the nature of every rational soul? or does it possess its counterpart in a beneficent all-powerful Father who has thus constituted mankind with a religious nature in order that they might "seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him"? There is not in all nature one known correlate without the existence of its companion, for all the parts are nicely adjusted for the mutual benefit and harmony of the whole. The reflection of the man in the water is sufficient evidence of the existence of the man himself. The echo implies the real voice. The shadows seen in the subterranean cave by the captives described in "Plato's Republic" were cast by a real light behind them. If mankind has been groping for ages among the indistinct shadows of inferior religious faiths, those very shadows proclaim unmistakably the existence of a light somewhere, the "true light which"—in some degree at least—"lighteth every man that cometh into the world."

The innate character of the religious senti-

ment being established, we must accept it as the voice of God, as a divine utterance, however much it may be misunderstood or misinterpreted.

We wish to notice one more of the fundamental intuitions, because of the bearing it has on our knowledge of the being of God, knowledge which is absolutely necessary as the basis of the revelation to be considered in future chapters. I refer to the principle of *causality*. Of all the beliefs of humanity nothing is accepted as more certain than this: *Every effect must have an efficient cause*. By this innate idea the mind of man intuitively mounts, as it were by leaps and bounds, to the conception of a grand self-existent, all-sufficient First Cause as the Author of all material phenomena. Bishop Butler in his "Analogy of Revealed Religion" and Dr. Paley in his writings have clearly and philosophically proved that nature impresses upon us this conception. And even Draper says, "The face of creation testifies that there has been a Creator."¹ With this agree the words of Scripture: "That which may be known of God is manifest to them . . . for the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that

1 Conflict, p. 58.

are made, even his eternal power and Godhead."

Rom. 1:19, 20.

"The spacious firmament on high,
With all the blue etherial sky,
And spangled heavens, a shining frame,
Their great Original proclaim.
Th' unwearied sun, from day to day,
Doth his Creator's power display;
And publishes to every land
The work of an Almighty hand.

"Soon as the evening shades prevail,
The moon takes up the wondrous tale;
And, nightly, to the listening earth
Repeats the story of her birth;
While all the stars that round her burn,
And all the planets in their turn,
Confirm the tidings as they roll,
And spread the truth from pole to pole.

"What though in solemn silence all
Move round this dark terrestrial ball?
What though no real voice, nor sound,
Amidst their radiant orbs be found?
In Reason's ear they all rejoice
And utter forth a glorious voice;
Forever singing, as they shine,
'The hand that made us is divine.' "

—Addison.

We are aware that Kant has denied the possibility of a knowledge of supersensuous things by means of the pure reason; but he was constrained to acknowledge the ideas of God, of freedom, and of immortality as postulates of the practical reason.² And with reference to causality he said,

² Critique of Practical Reason.

"The great whole would sink into the abyss of nothing, if we did not admit something original and independently external to this infinite contingent, and as the cause of its origin." He holds that we can not logically assert absolute primordial causality, but can affirm causality only for the existing order of things. Well, that is sufficient for all practical theistic purposes. We do not profess to be able alone by searching to "find out God," to "find out the Almighty unto perfection." Job 11:7.

In the domain of physical science we find many references to the "laws of nature"; but laws, we must bear in mind, effect nothing; they are only the methods by which the phenomena of nature are manifested. But the underlying forces, or force, which produces this orderly, methodical progression is outside of the ordinary field of science and belongs to the realm of philosophy. The reason of man promptly traces an effect backward through a series of intermediate, or so-called secondary, causes until it has found relief and satisfaction in a primary, unconditioned, uncaused CAUSE. "There is no fact of science from which philosophy can not find a path leading directly to God. If the scientist does not find the path, it is because he does not seek it. He

contents himself with partial knowledge, rather than go beyond the data and methods of science. Amusing himself with the means, he loses sight of the end. He is a man sent by the Almighty to rear a temple; and finding some prettily colored stones in a quarry, he entertains himself with these, instead of laying them in the massive wall. He is a child studying the alphabet, who thinks the acquisition of the letters the end of all learning.”¹

“It is a necessity of science, as well as of religion, that the trustworthiness of mind be admitted,” says George Lorimer. “If it is not, then everything is uncertain; if it is, then its testimony to the supersensuous, the superhuman and divine, is conclusive and unimpeachable.”² Newton said, “It no doubt belongs to natural philosophy to inquire concerning God from the observation of phenomena.”

A study of the material world convinces us that design is everywhere manifest. All the parts are beautifully and harmoniously correlated, and thus we arrive at the conclusion that the whole is the product of a single designing intelligence. This doctrine, commonly known as “final cause,” is

1 Reconciliation of Science and Religion, p. 131.

2 Isms Old and New, p. 27.

termed teleology, and has numbered among its supporters the most brilliant thinkers of the ages—Socrates, Aristotle, Cicero, Newton, Cudworth, Locke, Samuel Parker, Galileo, Cuvier, and scores of others. Intelligence is an attribute of real being, therefore intelligent design must be the conscious product of a preexisting determining will. Consciousness, or sensibility, intelligence, and will proclaim personality; therefore we are under the necessity of conceiving the First Cause of all things to be a personal existence. It is easy to trace all rational human actions to a governing will, and correct reasoning resolves the superhuman manifestations back into an unconditioned divine Will as the source of all force.

Grove says, "In all phenomena the more closely they are investigated the more are we convinced that, humanly speaking, neither matter nor force can be created or annihilated, and that the essential cause is unattainable [by science]—causation is the will, creation is the act of God."¹

Sir John Herschel expresses himself thus: "It is but reasonable to regard the force of gravitation as the direct or indirect result of a Consciousness or a Will existing somewhere."²

¹ Correlation and Conservation of Physical Forces, p. 199.

² Outlines of Astronomy, pp. 233, 234.

Dr. Carpenter says, "Force must be regarded as the direct expression of will."³

And Wallace brings out the point very clearly when he says, "If we have traced one force, however minute, to an origin in our own will, while we have no knowledge of any other primary cause of force, it does not seem an improbable conclusion that all force may be will-force, and thus the whole universe is not only dependent on, but actually is the will of higher intelligences or of one SUPREME INTELLIGENCE."⁴

Thus, we find that while man intuitively feels the presence of divinity and possesses a nature that prompts him to religious devotions, he is able to obtain a more consistent and rational conception of the divine, self-existing, all-sufficient One by a process of reflective thought. This knowledge of the being of God having been laid in human nature is not the subject of revelation, but is a necessary antecedent for that divine revelation. The writers of the Christian Scriptures assume, but do not so much as even affirm, the being and existence of God. The first chapter of the Bible opens with the words, "In the beginning God cre-

³ Human Physiology, p. 542.

⁴ Natural Selection, p. 368. For these quotations on the will I am indebted to Dr. Cocker, Theistic Conception of the World, p. 39.

ated the heaven and the earth." Hence it may be said that the Scriptures do not come to us as a revelation *of* the existence of a higher power, but are a revelation *from* God showing his relations with mankind. In other words, *they point out to fallen man the way back to God.*

Without those primitive ideas, man could neither comprehend nor appreciate an attempted revelation. There must be something in his nature corresponding to the object and end of such a revelation; and it is found in the fact that he intuitively recognizes the presence of the divine (which primitive belief bears the most rigid examination of the developing intellect) and feels an inward inclination to reverence and worship. In other words, he possesses a religious nature.

The fear of God, however, precedes the love of God. Among savages, whose mental powers are undeveloped, the operation of destructive agencies in nature make the deepest impression upon the mind, and hence their deities are generally conceived to be revengeful or malignant spirits. The developing intellect, however, soon discerns so many evidences of goodness and of beneficence in nature that more exalted notions of divine beings come to be entertained, and eventually the monotheistic idea is reached. While to us who have

obtained God's written revelation telling what he has already done and will yet do for mankind, there are so many evidences of his paternal care that all of our slavish fears are banished, and "we love him, because he first loved us."

"Give us a God—a living God,
One to wake the sleeping soul,
One to cleanse the tainted blood
Whose pulses in our bosoms roll."
—C. G. Rosenberg.

CHAPTER II.

CONSCIENCE.

In the preceding chapter we have shown the universal prevalence of the religious sentiment by its various systems and forms of external manifestation; but the subject is incomplete without a consideration of *conscience*, which is a constituent of the religious nature. Men not only intuitively realize the presence of the Unseen Power, but also feel a sense of dependence and of moral obligation growing out of their relations with that higher power; and this native feeling of the soul that a standard of right and wrong exists and that it is one's duty to conform to that standard is what we term conscience. This sentiment also is common to all men; for all instinctively feel that they are moral beings, placed under a moral law enacted by a Moral Governor.

In view of the universal belief in a future state in which men will be the recipients of rewards and punishments determined by their conduct in this life, this subject of moral accountability is extremely important, and it has always exerted a powerful influence upon the human mind. Still we

would not have it otherwise; for we could by no means desire the extinction of our rational will and a consequent degradation to the plane of inanimate nature, nor even to that of the animal kingdom below us. "What!" exclaimed Rousseau, "to render man incapable of evil, would we have him lowered to mere brute instinct? No! God of my soul, I will not reproach thee for having made me in thine image, so that I might be good and free and happy like thyself."

Darwin says: "A moral being is one who is capable of comparing his past and future actions or motives, and of approving or disapproving of them. We have no reason to suppose that any of the lower animals have this capacity."¹ Bishop Butler describes man's moral susceptibility thus: "That which renders beings capable of moral government, is their having a moral nature, and moral faculties of perception and of action. Brute creatures are impressed and actuated by various instincts and propensions; so also are we. But additional to this, we have a capacity of reflecting upon actions and characters and making them an object to our thought; and on doing this, we naturally and unavoidably approve some actions, under the peculiar view of their being virtuous and

1 Descent of Man, p. 108.

of good desert, and disapprove others as vicious and of ill desert. That we have this moral approving and disapproving faculty is certain from our experiencing it in ourselves and recognizing it in each other.”¹

While this quotation from Butler clearly shows our position as moral beings, the expression “moral faculties of perception and of action” seems to me misleading; for so far as perception is concerned, I can see no difference between the faculty that cognizes the law of gravitation or an algebraic equation and that which determines the character of our actions, except that in the latter case the exercise of the “faculty” is based on ethical data. If the phrase is intended merely to signify man’s natural power of discrimination and of judgment exercised on moral questions, we take no exceptions. But it is certain that we must make a clear distinction between that intuitive feeling of the soul that a standard of right and wrong exists, and that faculty of the intellectual nature which considers the circumstances, weighs every evidence in the case, and pronounces final judgment as to what really is right and wrong. If this distinction be not legitimate, then that inward

¹ Analogy of Revealed Religion (N. Y. Edition, 1875), p. 329.

sentiment which prompts to the exercise of moral obligations is to be measured by the strength of a man's intellect. This we know is not true, for the admonitions of conscience bear no direct ratio to the intellectual development.

I have already referred to the fact that conscience is a constituent of the religious nature. The religious sentiment, however, can not be classed as a discerning faculty; for intellect and faith stand in different categories. This distinction is made clear by the antagonism that has always existed between the religious and the intellectual faculties.¹ There is doubtless an element of perception in that intuitional disposition to reverence and worship a Supreme Power; but such discernment must be differentiated from the exercise of that higher power of reason which seizes upon the facts in the external world and seeks an intelligent explanation of all natural phenomena and by a philosophical process of deduction arrives at the conviction of one omnipotent God—Author, Creator, Conservator, and Sustainer, of all things. Religion is only the cry of humanity for its God, a seeking after him in the dark, while feeling his presence.

¹ For a further illustration of this thought see the following chapter: "The Mental Faculty."

With conscience standing in antithesis to the intellectual faculties, and thus deprived of that power of discernment and of discrimination so commonly attributed to it, religion stands vindicated of many of the reproaches that have been cast upon it. And this very distinction makes prominent (as we shall see in a subsequent chapter) the necessity of a divine revelation in order to make known, not the existence of a higher Power, but his relations to us, and to furnish an *authoritative standard* of our duty toward each other. That conscience does not possess the power of discrimination and thus supply an authoritative standard is shown by the fact that it is completely controlled and regulated by the religious beliefs and that these beliefs are, in turn, subject entirely to the law of the reason when it is developed sufficiently to take the throne and issue its decrees.

“Reason,” Butler has truly said, “is the only faculty we have wherewith to judge concerning anything, even revelation itself.” Man can not possibly believe a thing to be true and at the same time know it to be false. Since, however, the intellect of man is fallible his judgment also is fallible; and therefore his beliefs, outside of divine illumination, are more or less defective. But

the whole history of religious phenomena shows conclusively that, whatever a man believes to be morally right or wrong, his conscience will act in accordance with his belief, becoming an executive officer that will lash the soul with remorse when it is adjudged guilty of the violation of the moral standard entertained under the authority of the intellect. Conscience thus becomes, not the legislative authority, but the executive; not the discriminating power, but what may be termed a *moral sensibility*.

“Man, wretched man, when'er he stoops to sin,
Feels, with the act, a strong remorse within.”

—*Juvenal*.

That conscience is not a discerning faculty, but merely a moral sensibility operating in conformity to the religious belief of the individual, though not the popular conception, is, nevertheless, a true description of its character, which furnishes an adequate explanation of its varied manifestations. It is well known that there is considerable difference between the moral standards held by the numerous tribes and nations outside of Christianity; and even among Christian people do we not witness great diversity of opinion regarding the propriety or impropriety of many things? We can not

rashly discredit their conscientiousness.¹ This fact of diversity merely emphasizes the thought that conscience does not furnish an authoritative standard, but is itself controlled by the belief of the individual. Take, for example, the religious observance of certain days. This is something that is necessarily ceremonial, for there is nothing in nature that causes one day to differ from another; and a man would never be led to regard one day as essentially more sacred than any other day if he was not taught so to regard it as having been authoritatively set apart for that purpose. So the man who has been taught and believes that the seventh day of the week, which was formerly set apart as a Sabbath of rest, is still enjoined upon us by divine authority, will feel compunctions of conscience if he fails to observe it thus; while the person who has been taught and believes that the law enjoining the seventh-day Sabbath was abolished by Christ can disregard it with impunity and work on that day with all good conscience. If, however, he believes that Sunday was set apart by Christ as a Sabbath in place of the seventh

1 To avoid misunderstanding, I wish to say that the statement above concerning the difference of conscience-standards among Christians does not relate to those greater questions of morality which are so clearly settled in the Scriptures that we receive, but refers to minor points, generally of a ceremonial nature.

day, he will feel remorse of conscience for performing unnecessary labor on that day, while the first person feels none; and yet both may be living in all good conscience toward God. Still another person disbelieves in Saturday-observance and feels assured that the first day of the week was not appointed as a Sabbath to take the place of the abolished seventh-day Sabbath in any sense, but is merely a memorial day commemorating the resurrection of Christ, a day of rejoicing and of thanksgiving to God, but no more holy or sacred than any other day. This man would not consider it wrong in the nature of things to work on Sunday; and though he might on that day refrain from the performance of manual labor on account of the conscience of others or because of an adverse public sentiment, his own conscience would grant him personal liberty. This is not the place to discuss the theological character of these different positions; they are adduced merely to show the natural elasticity of the conscience under the influence of religious belief. A multitude of similar illustrations could easily be brought forward if necessary; but in the light of a proper understanding of the nature of conscience, Christians who carefully read the fourteenth chapter of Romans and the eighth chapter of First Cor-

inthians will learn to respect the conscience of others and at the same time to refrain from all attempts to bind their own conscience-scruples upon their brethren.

Since conscience is subordinate to the authority of intellect as manifested in its relations to the religious instinct, we can not expect to find, as we have already observed, a practical uniform standard of morals among the various peoples and tribes outside of Christian influences. Nevertheless, we are not to understand that there is no uniformity whatever with respect to the greater questions of right and wrong. The laws governing human thought would naturally lead men to the recognition of certain principles which hold society together. Thus, the great principles of veracity, of justice, and of love are everywhere distinguished in the intellectual conception of men from falsehood, injustice, hatred, and cruelty. Therefore, stealing, lying, adultery, murder, etc. are generally conceded to be wrong, whatever the practises of a people may be. As Dr. Cocker has observed, "The savage Fijian regards theft, adultery, abduction, incendiarism, and treason as serious crimes." And Dr. Livingstone tells us that "on questioning intelligent men among the Backwains as to their former knowledge of good and

evil, of God, and of a future state, they have scouted the idea of any of them ever having been without a tolerably clear conception on all these subjects. Respecting their sense of right and wrong, they profess that nothing we indicate as sin ever appeared to them otherwise, except the statement that it was wrong to have more wives than one.”¹

We have only to attend to the facts in the case in order to establish beyond doubt that a native consciousness that certain actions are right and certain others in their very nature wrong exists in the soul of men, accompanied by a moral sensibility, called conscience, which imperatively demands conformity to the acknowledged standard. This is distinctly affirmed by the apostle Paul in that famous passage wherein he describes the operation of what is commonly called the moral faculty. “For when the Gentiles, which have not the law [the written revealed law of God], do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing

¹ *Missionary Travels and Researches in South Africa*, p. 153.

one another." Rom. 2:14, 15. By this means the entire heathen world rests under the consciousness of sin.

But while the various tribes of mankind have certain notions of right and wrong that coincide with the Christian standard, we must not suppose that among a people undeveloped in understanding these ideas appear so clearly defined as among an enlightened people. The intellectual state prevents a broad conception of these principles on the basis of a universal ideal; hence they are generally restricted in practise to people of their own tribe. A man might have a definite conception that the murder of one of his own family or tribe would constitute a serious crime, and at the same time feel no compunction of conscience whatever for the killing of an enemy or of one belonging to another tribe. In fact, he would be more apt to feel reproached by his conscience if he did not avenge himself upon an enemy. Even in Greece and Rome, with all of their boasted civilization and great philosophical teachers, the people never arose to the sublime conception of the brotherhood of all men, but the ethical standards of their moralists were given with especial reference to their own nation.

Mr. Darwin refers to a peculiar case described

by Dr. Landor, who acted as a magistrate in West Australia and who relates that a native on his farm, after losing one of his wives from disease, came and said that "he was going to a distant tribe to spear a woman, to satisfy his sense of duty to his wife. I told him that if he did so, I would send him to prison for life. He remained about the farm for some months, but got exceedingly thin, and complained that he could not rest or eat, that his wife's spirit was haunting him, because he had not taken a life for hers. I was inexorable, and assured him that nothing would save him if he did." The man finally disappeared for more than a year and afterwards returned in excellent condition, and one of his wives informed Dr. Landor that her husband had killed a woman belonging to a distant tribe.¹

It seems strange any one could become so perverted in understanding as not to comprehend and feel that such an act is wrong; but we know that even among people who generally acknowledge murder to be sinful, under the influence of religious zeal and fanaticism the slaughter of innocent persons has taken place without any apparent feeling of regret or of remorse, but, on the other hand, with distinct evidences of the appro-

¹ Descent of Man, p. 111.

bation of their conscience. We might consider the case of Saul. Shortly before his death he testified, "I have lived in all good conscience before God until this day." Acts 23:1. That this statement can not be limited to his Christian experience is shown by his further statement with reference to his persecution of the church: "I verily thought with myself that *I ought* to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem; and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death, I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme; and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities." Acts 26:9-11. Doubtless a large part of the persecution of the Christians of all ages has been done by people acting with an approving conscience. Christ predicted this state of affairs when he said to his disciples, "The time cometh, that whosoever killeth you will think that he doeth God service." John 16:2.

In the case of such religious persecution, however, we observe that it occurs, not because of a failure on the part of the persecutors to understand

the great law against murder, but because of a mistaken idea that they are the special ministers of God to execute his vengeance upon offenders. Cardinal Bellarmine justified these religious murders by the Catholics on the ground that Elijah slew the prophets of Baal. And doubtless Saul in persecuting the first Christians felt that it was perfectly safe and proper to follow such a precedent. This thought is clearly expressed in the words of the Scripture last quoted.

But what bearing has this on the subject of conscience? It demonstrates the truth of the statement already made that conscience operates entirely in accordance with what a man believes to be right, regardless of whether the act is really right or wrong. Hence the folly of attempting to follow conscience as a sufficient guide in religious matters. Conscience was made, not to lead, but to follow. To follow the conscience blindly—using a homely comparison—is only to make the progress of the canine animal playfully pursuing its tail. All true straight-forward individual progress has been made by the legitimate use of the intellect in searching out and appropriating the great facts of *truth* and the grand principles of our relationship with God and man. “Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.”

As soon as these important laws of human duty have been clearly discerned as proceeding from an authoritative source in the revelation of God, conscience as an *awakened sensibility*, is true to its nature and demands a conduct consistent with the truths cognized. When such obedience is willingly rendered, we can truthfully say with the apostle, "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience." 2 Cor. 1:12. But if we knowingly disregard the things that we recognize as obligatory upon us, conscience, still faithful to its task, torments us with a scourge applied mercilessly to the naked soul.

"Oh, conscience! conscience! man's most faithful friend,
Him canst thou comfort, ease, relieve, defend;
But if he will thy friendly checks forego,
Thou art, oh! woe for me, his deadliest foe."

—Crabbe.

"Nor ear can hear nor tongue can tell
The tortures of that inward hell."

—Byron.

CHAPTER III.

THE MENTAL FACULTY.

In the two preceding chapters we had for our subjects the moral and the religious nature of man. We now desire to consider briefly his intellectual nature with especial reference to its bearing on the operation of the religious faculty. With this survey of man's mental and moral constitution we shall have laid a firm foundation for an intelligent explanation and understanding of the revelation which has been given for the benefit of humanity. A satisfactory solution of the manner of God's dealings with the race can be given on no other basis. It is evident that if the Almighty chose to make known his will respecting human duty, he would reveal it in a manner agreeing with the constitutional nature of man. When, therefore, we have an intelligent understanding of his requirements, and then find a system entirely consistent with his moral, religious, and intellectual needs, we have the strongest presumptive evidence that that system *is a divine revelation*.

It is unnecessary to enter into a lengthy argument to prove that man is by nature an intelligent being, for this point is conceded by all. Nor shall

we attempt to portray his marvelous achievements in exploration, invention, art, science, and literature. The main subject of this work is *religion*, and therefore we are here concerned with the mental powers only so far as their relations to the religious nature are apparent. Both of these faculties must be properly recognized; for they are distinct, and form an essential part of man. Writers usually represent them as antagonistic to each other, and such, indeed, they seem to be. Yet a careful study of the history of their strife shows that the conflict has been in reality a series of interactions that has conditioned all progress. The religious nature has sometimes sought to enslave the intellect; on the other hand, the liberated intellect, in turn, has frequently exceeded the bounds of its natural limitations, encroaching upon the legitimate domain of religion, and has sought to relegate her entire system to the realm of superstition and error. But the natural disposition of the heart to love and worship a supreme being can not be crushed out, nor can the mental powers be permanently enslaved. They have their proper spheres of operation, wherein they exercise a beneficial influence upon each other. Without the development of a questioning intellect, religion could never have been elevated above the plane of a

groveling superstition; and, on the other hand, since the baser passions of man's nature are always clamoring for excessive indulgence, without the moral restraints of religion there could have been no exalted and permanent civilization. Thus, "under the overruling of a beneficent Providence, antagonism is made the law of human progress."¹

Among all people of the lowest order there exists the strongest feeling of the presence of unseen powers; but the reflective faculties being undeveloped, all notions of the divine are necessarily vague and undefined. Everything that occurs in nature is conceived to be the result of the agency of unseen spirits. These are supposed to take up their abode in all manner of objects, animate and inanimate. In this stage the religion of the individual is termed fetichism, and he worships even such objects as trees, stones, posts, etc. At a later time, however, only the extraordinary events in nature are regarded as the direct action of unseen spirits; and with the further development of the intellectual faculties still more exalted notions of

1 Farrar, *Critical History of Free Thought*. The limits and scope of the present work requires the briefest reference to this important subject of progress and its causes. However, it has been ably discussed by other writers. In addition to Farrar's work, see Winchell, *Reconciliation of Science and Religion*; Draper, *Conflict of Science and Religion*; and Dorchester, *Problem of Religious Progress*, etc.

these spiritual agencies are entertained. Through the principle of causality, upon reflection the conception that the material world owes its origin to some sufficient cause is formed, and thence proceeds the conviction of supreme creative powers. And when the beauty, harmony, and design manifested in nature become the subject of reflective thought, then the mind rises to the conception that such an effect must be the result of designing intelligence, and therefore the gods are believed to be man-like, but possessed of great power. This is the anthropomorphic stage, and the result is a higher religious standard. However, sinful man in conceiving the gods to exist in the likeness of men naturally transfers to the gods his own evil passions as well as the good that still inheres in his character. This has been the invariable result, as the entire history of anthropomorphic polytheism shows. Nevertheless, this system is a great advance over the more primitive forms of the nature-religions, and it lays a basis for the establishment of the ethical religions. A further development of the mental powers leads, by a philosophical process, to the grand conception of one personal First Cause, the Author of all things. This is the stage of monotheism.

Religion naturally embraces all that is con-

ceived to be truth, and thus she throws her mantle around much that is false as well as what is true, and therefore the whole mass, hallowed by her presence and sanctified by her authority, is regarded as sacred. But intellect, as Winchell has observed, being progressive and caring little for things held sacred, desiring only what may be demonstrated to be truth, naturally disregards many of these cherished religious beliefs; and this occasions the conflict between the two. Thus, the introduction of the monotheistic idea in Greece was destined to banish from the world the whole herd of polytheistic divinities or else reduce them to the rank of greatly inferior beings. Yet for the advocacy of such a *heresy*, Socrates was condemned to death by polytheistic Athens and forced to drink the fatal hemlock.

With this knowledge of the leading principles in man's nature, we see that a true and successful religion must rest upon a basis free from all error and embracing all truth. A system which could be logically reduced to absurdity could not stand. A religion erroneous in its vital principles could not endure the rational test; if committed to a false science, the developing intellect would ultimately undermine its foundation, and the whole structure would sink to oblivion.

There is only one perfect religion, one which has stood the test of the ages, and that religion is CHRISTIANITY. The Christian system rests on the platform of truth—ALL TRUTH—and on this broad foundation all of man's moral and mental faculties have an abundance of room for legitimate employment. It is only *false religion* and *non-religion* that have denied to man the free exercise of these native faculties. Catholicism, excessive in religious zeal, has sought to enslave the intellectual powers; and infidelity and atheism, regarding only intellectual development, have endeavored to rob mankind of that deep-seated religious disposition. Both attempts have ended in failure. These principles are God-ordained, intended to exist side by side, each exerting a balancing influence over the other. Let us notice briefly, in history, some of the disastrous effects resulting from the ignoring of these important faculties of mankind.

After the primitive spirituality and simplicity of the gospel had declined, the influence of such dogmatists as Irenæus, Tertullian, and Tatian prepared the way for the Council of Nice and the subsequent development of the Romish church, which assumed authority on all matters of truth and belief. With the papal church in the as-

cendant, intellect was for ages forced into submission. Religion, not satisfied in her own legitimate field, the department of faith and morals, encroached upon the domain of reason when exercised in physical science, medicine, and astronomy, and so enslaved the naturally aspiring intellect that the spirit of free inquiry almost died out. The natural result was that so-called Christianity during the Dark Ages consisted principally of useless and senseless forms, ceremonies, rites, and dogmas, which formed no part of apostolic Christianity, and which could never have been introduced had enlightened intellect been free to exercise its wholesome influence. Free from all restraints, religion sank to the depths of a repulsive superstition. Ignorance reigned everywhere under the guise of religion.

The little show of learning that appears among the schoolmen during medieval times is scarcely worthy of notice as a manifestation of true knowledge; for their efforts were spent in trying to interpret Aristotle in accordance with the received canons of the church, or else in subtle discussions about the number of feathers in the wings of the cherubim, whether or not an angel could come from heaven to earth without passing through the intervening space, or in speculating about the num-

ber of angels that could stand on the point of a needle. "Was a proposition in physics or metaphysics to be determined? The schoolmen sent you, not to analyze the thing; but they coerced it into the categories and syllabus of the subtle Greek; they put it into the straight waist-coat of some dialectic formula; they put it upon the rack and torture of syllogism and enthymeme; and, finally, bound it down and smothered it by the decrees of councils and the bulls of popes. Was the inquirer still unsatisfied? The ponderous names of a Duns Scotus, a Thomas Aquinas, or some other angelic doctor, or some Gregory or Innocent or Boniface, were made to thunder about his ears with the technical barbarisms of a scholastic jargon, till, overwhelmed and confounded, if not convinced, especially as those barbarisms were no mere *bruta fulmina*, but behind them was brandished before his eyes the *ultima* reason of spiritual despots—the mightier logic of imprisonment, wheel, and faggot."¹

With religion on the throne and intellect in chains, it is easy to understand, as already observed, why such a mass of incongruities, errors, and superstitions as is upheld by the Romish church became a part of religious worship and

1 Skeptical Era in Modern History, p. 72.

practise during the medieval period. The correct exercise of all the faculties of man's being is required in order to preserve the proper equilibrium of his religious faith. Religion is no more safe unless understandingly sanctioned by intellect than reason is to be trusted without the morally restraining force of a proper religion. But during this period of religious tyranny every attempt the intellect made to assert its rights of independent thinking was put down by the strong arm of the church. For advocating the Copernican theory of astronomy and the plurality of worlds Giordano Bruno was burned at the stake. And a few years later the immortal Galileo, fearing a similar fate, was constrained to kneel before the Holy (?) Inquisition and say, among other things: "I have been judged as being vehemently suspected of heresy, for having maintained and believed that the sun was the center of the world and immovable, and that the earth was not the center, and that it moved. Therefore wishing to efface from the minds of your Eminence and from all Catholic Christianity this vehement suspicion conceived justly against me, it is with a sincere heart and with faith not feigned that I abjure, curse, and detest the above-named errors and heresies." According to the principles of man's natural consti-

tution, such a state of affairs could not always exist. The offended and indignant intellect was sure to revolt and issue a declaration of independence. Well has Hugh Miller said: "Preconceived opinion, whether it hold fast, with Lactantius and the old schoolmen, to the belief that there can be no antipodes, or assert, with Caccini and Bellarmine, that our globe hangs lazily in the heavens, while the sun moves round it, must yield ultimately to scientific truth."¹

It is a current belief that the Reformation was the direct means of the liberation of the intellect. It was, however, only one of the contributing factors to this result. While the Reformation broke the power of Rome's universal supremacy, the early history of Protestantism shows that the intolerant spirit of dogmatism was transferred to the new order and that the people submitted to a new master. It was this spirit that led Luther to repudiate Zwingli, who on many points was nearer the truth than was Luther himself; that caused the Protestant Council of Zurich to drown Felix Mantz for a religious opinion now received as truth by a large part of Christendom; that was responsible for that saddest blot on the career of Calvin—the commitment of Servetus to the stake;

1 Testimony of the Rocks, p. 103.

and that caused Melancthon, the co-reformer of Luther, to rejoice in the execution of heretics and to pronounce the burning of Servetus a "pious and memorable example for all posterity." According to Ueberweg, Luther manifested a hostility toward science and philosophy as fierce as had been shown by any of the scholastics.² "Luther and Melancthon were both violently hostile to the Copernican system in astronomy." But this intolerant spirit brought out of Catholicism by the early reformers afterwards became modified more in accordance with the true spirit of Christianity. Thus, the Reformation contributed in a general way to the liberalizing movement that first made its appearance at a date anterior to the great religious revival.

During the fifteenth century Europe began to awaken from her long sleep of centuries, and made decided progress along intellectual lines. To this result a number of causes contributed—the decline of feudalism, the discovery of America, the invention of the art of printing, and perhaps above all else the revival of letters. While the Turks were overrunning the Eastern Empire, students fled westward into Italy, bringing with them their literary treasures of antiquity, many of which

² History of Philosophy, Vol. II, p. 17.

were unknown in Western Europe before that time. A love for classical study, amounting nearly to a passion, sprang up in Italy, and students from Northern Europe journeyed there in order to obtain a knowledge of the Greek and Latin classics. The discoveries in physical science and the advances made in modern philosophy, aided by the advantages which the successes of the Reformation afforded, finally completed the liberation of the intellectual powers.

With the complete liberation of the intellectual faculties, however, a reaction set in. The Italian Renaissance was decidedly skeptical in spirit. Being in chief part a revival of Paganism, it could not but develop a strong anti-Christian sentiment. Thenceforth a line of skeptical writers and reasoners can be traced. Intoxicated with successes in the departments of physical science and philosophical inquiry, the proud intellect finally encroached upon religion until evangelical Christianity was almost threatened with extinction. This period became known as the "age of reason," and it culminated, in France, in the wild delirium of that terrible revolution in which immorality held high carnival, all religion was trampled under foot, and the God of heaven declared dethroned. The same evil influences at work in England were pre-

vented from reaching such a climax of insanity by the strong antidote furnished by the Wesleys in the revival of evangelical religion. And Dorchester¹ quotes a writer in the *Index* as saying that "all the great men who took part with Mr. Paine in laying the foundations of the government of the United States, with very few exceptions, held the same theological sentiments, although they did not publicly identify themselves with him in his attacks on the church and its religion. And they would have completely revolutionized the sentiments of the American people but for the influence of George Whitefield and John Wesley."

Thus, the period of excessive intellectual operation was followed by a religious revival, which again emphasized the claims of religion upon the hearts of men. During the last century, however, the progress and the claims of science have again exerted a tremendous influence upon the position occupied by religion. But already we can see the light of a religious revival purer in its forms than those that have gone before. All hail the dawn of a better day when Religion, stripped of all extraneous, evanescent superstitions, useless forms and ceremonies, and clad only in the royal robes of abiding truth and righteousness, shall

1 Problem of Religious Progress, p. 106.

mount the throne of the soul's affections crowned Queen of the race!

Though regretting that so much calumny, bitterness, and violence has characterized these important movements in past history, we rejoice in the advantages that have accrued to mankind. Counteraction is manifested everywhere in nature. Centrifugal force and centripetal force, attraction and repulsion, are examples of the law of antagonism. And no true social progress can be made without a proper reciprocal action of the religious and intellectual faculties.

"The spirit of inquiry and investigation may sometimes be bold, rash, irregular, discarding all responsibility. It may push sacred and well-established principles into temporary peril, with no just vindication for such conduct. But inquiry is the path of individual improvement, a normal state . . . Does it sometimes seem irregular and destructive? So is all progress, for it is the advance of living elements over the decayed. It is unavoidable that sharp criticisms, friendly, unfriendly, and even destructive will arise to test truth. By such tests, piercing to the core, we get rid of old superstitions and husks destitute of vitality."¹

1 Problem of Religious Progress, pp. 97, 98.

“As if religion were intended
For nothing else but to be mended.”

—Butler.

There are still persons, however, who sincerely think that if they were forced to believe that the world is really round and revolves, or that the moon possesses no light of its own but reflects the light of the sun, their faith in the Bible would be almost shattered. Such confusion of ideas is the result of failure to discriminate properly between those things that are purely religious and thus the subject of revelation, and those that naturally belong to the domain of intellect. What has the shape or the motion of the earth to do with the questions of faith and of morals? What bearing has the condition of the moon on the subject of salvation and the road to heaven? Since religion naturally sanctifies everything that is believed to be true, men have always incorporated into their creeds many beliefs of a secular nature which will not bear the scrutiny of a searching investigation. These crudities must be purged out; the result will be a purer and lasting faith.

We have seen that religion, when exercised independently of an approving intelligence, sinks to the level of a repulsive superstition, and that reason, freed from the controlling influences of a

holy religion, leads to immorality and atheism. It is unnecessary, however, for society to be divided into two great warring camps in order to secure general progress. An equilibrium can be reached in each individual by a proper recognition of both the religious and the intellectual faculties. The norm is reached through their reciprocal action. Belief alone is not sufficient; for a man can have faith in that which is erroneous as well as in that which is true, and an appeal must be made to his knowing faculty in order to enlighten him in that which is really truth. Almost every man is conscious of some change or modification of his religious beliefs occasioned by the development of his understanding. Clement of Alexandria has said, "They say that a man can be a believer without learning; so, also, we assert that it is impossible for a man without learning to comprehend the things which are declared in the faith."¹

¹ Stromata, Book I, Chap. VI.

NECESSITY AND NATURE
OF A
DIVINE REVELATION

CHAPTER IV.

NECESSITY OF A DIVINE REVELATION.

Our brief examination of man's mental and moral constitution has shown that he ranks not only as an intellectual subject, but as a religious being as well, by his possession of moral faculties and an innate disposition impelling him to worship. Our object in the present chapter is to show that he does not possess the means of effecting his own moral regeneration and that hence there is necessity of a divine revelation. To state the subject differently, we propose to make clear this important fact: that *subjective truth is not sufficient* to secure redemption from his fallen condition in sin. It is maintained by some that sufficient light is revealed subjectively in the human consciousness and that therefore there is no need of an *objective* revelation; that is, a revelation made *to* him. Now, in the first place, we observe that if sufficient light had always shone in the inner consciousness to guide man's feet in the pathway of peace to the goal of righteousness, then we might, it seems, be able to discover some such fruits of its workings. But in all the recorded history of the human race we find no such results. Sinful man, left to himself, has ever gravitated downwards to moral, so-

cial, and political ruin. Others maintain that the revelation which God has made of himself in nature is sufficient to elevate mankind, but the same test that we have applied to subjective revelation convinces us otherwise. "Undoubtedly the works of the Almighty influence wonderfully the human mind. They exalt, overawe, delight, and expand the soul; they sometimes hush to silence, or awaken praise, create ennobling images or kindle poetic fires; but it is exceedingly questionable whether they ever do more than render active what is already latent in the man. But be that as it may, though nature may quicken the muse of the poet and the genius of the artist, and although it may at times stimulate devotion, it is practically powerless to reclaim the wanderer from right, to purify the heart of the vicious, or to restore hope to the despairing.

"The sun that rolls resplendently in space, whose brightness is the shadow of its Creator's glory, subtle and penetrating though its light may be, invading chambers of densest ignorance and inundating dens of vice, never yet has flooded the benighted intellect with healing radiance or quickened into moral fruitfulness the barren conscience. The humblest roadside preacher in his poverty has made more converts to virtue's cause than has the

king of day in all the fulness of his insufferable splendor. Ocean in its vastness—a world of water rising in mists and ascending in waves to salute a world of fire—awakens not with the thunder of its rolling billows the penitence of the prodigal; and neither does its majestic and appalling power rescue the dissolute and depraved. The sweet saintly life of a Christian mother has done more to save the sea-boy from eternal ruin than all the mighty headstrong waters that swirl in tempests or sleep in calms. They who dwell among the mountains, who inhabit solemn solitudes, who gaze on the untrodden snows of altitudes beyond their reach, and who are familiar with the antheming winds as they traverse the pine forests whose roots cling to inhospitable rocks, are no better, no purer, than they who tread the muddy streets and gaze continually on the blank, monotonous houses of great cities.

“The poorest mission in the most squalid quarter of a dense metropolis will do more real work in a year for virtue and piety than the beauty of Chamounix or the savage grandeur of the Engadine will accomplish in an age. Morally, the Sunday-school children of a country are worth more than all the stars that shine in heaven or all the flowers that gleam on earth, and in things pertaining to re-

generation the Judsons and Cloughs are of more value than the Himalayas; and every Christian laborer consecrating the meagerest talents to the Master's cause is of more importance than wooded dell, savage glen, majestic cataracts, and cloud-crowned mountains."¹

Nor does the developing intellect which elevates religion from the lowest forms of nature-worship solve the problem of moral renovation. In Egypt, where flourished one of the most brilliant civilizations of antiquity, the people worshiped such debasing objects as bulls and birds, flies and onions, and were swamped in the filth and the miasma of a moral quagmire. And when the stage of anthropomorphic polytheism is reached, where all the phenomena of nature is conceived to be the direct workings of superior man-like beings, the moral result remains unchanged. Sinful man in ascribing character to these imaginary gods can only conceive an image like unto himself. They are like the half-mythical Spectre of the Brocken in the Hartz Mountains. As the observer on Mount Brocken sees in the mists a huge, undefined image of himself; so the heathen, unavoidably attributing his own character to his creations of fancy, beholds merely the projected shadow of himself.

1 Lorimer, *Isms Old and New*, pp. 115-117.

Even a superficial examination of heathen mythology will show the sinful character ascribed to their objects of worship. In Hindu mythology, Indra, the god of rain, is conceived to be a carnal monster guilty of adultery. Brahma, the first person of the Hindu Triad, is said to have had an unholy lust for his own daughter Satarupa. While Parasu-Rama, one of the avatars of the gods, is reported to have "killed all the warriors of the world twenty-one times to avenge the death of his father."

This principle was recognized long ago by Cicero, who said, "Instead of the transfer to man of that which is divine, they transferred human sins to the gods, and then experienced again the necessary reaction." And when, therefore, the devotees "experience again the necessary reaction," it is clear that they become like their gods in moral character. "They that make them are like unto them; so is every one that trusteth in them." Psa. 115: 8.

Plato was aware of this moral reaction when, in his "Republic," he advised that the foul deeds ascribed to the gods be not recited in public lest the youth be excited to the commission of crimes. Aristotle also advised that the exhibition of the statues and paintings representing the indecent actions of

the gods should be restricted to such temples as were devoted to those idols which presided over sensuality. But even such limitation could not avert the dreadful consequences; for the very belief that such was the character of the sanctioned objects of devotion would transform the worshipers into the same moral image. The result has always been the same in all countries and among all peoples. The gods of the Scythian tribes who invaded and subverted the Western Roman Empire were believed to be hero-kings, cruel and bloodthirsty, and their worshipers were like them. Kali, the wife of Siva, one of the popular goddesses in Hindu mythology, was conceived to be a most inhuman, furious character, delighting in bloodshed and adorned with human heads. Is it a marvel, then, that her worshipers were heartless and cruel, offering up human sacrifices in her honor until the atrocious practise was suppressed by the British Government during the last century? As a result of the licentious character of the Hindu gods, we find attached to the temples in Southern India thousands of prostitutes, the public property of those who worship at the shrines.

Walker quotes Tholuck, writing on the influence of heathenism in the past, thus: "We should naturally suppose that among so great a variety

of gods, of religious actions, of sacred vows, at least some better feeling of the heart must have been excited; that at least some truly pious sentiments would have been awakened. But when we consider the character of these superstitions, and the testimony of contemporaneous writers, such does not appear to have been the fact. Petronius's history of that period furnishes evidence that temples were frequented, altars crowned, and prayers offered to the gods, in order that they might render nights of unnatural lust agreeable; that they might favor acts of poisoning; that they might cause robberies and other crimes to prosper."

But would not the general conditions be altered by the development of the intellectual powers? When philosophical reasoning dethrones anthropomorphic polytheism and gives a more exalted conception of the divine power and of human duty, does not moral regeneration result? It is a favorite notion with certain visionaries that the salvation of the race can be effected through an educational process. Freely admitting the value of intellectual enlightenment, we dissent from the opinion that it is sufficient. Let us attend to some of the facts in the case.

In all the history of heathenism the places where intellect received its greatest development, as all

will allow, was in Greece and Rome. Here we have a galaxy of philosophers and moralists whose attainments still surprise, delight, and charm the world. In Athens, do we not find Socrates walking about the streets discoursing on the subject of one God and immortality? And does not the immortal Plato proclaim God to be a God of love, and enunciate an ethical standard of human duty? And when this intellectual epoch in Greece reached its zenith in the genius of the mighty Aristotle, "the master of those who know," was not the world well started on its road to regeneration? No; its course was absolutely unchanged.

Dionysius of Halicarnassus, as quoted by Walker, refers to the efforts of the philosophers to refine the popular faith, treating the actions ascribed to the gods as allegories, and says: "There are only a few who have become masters of this philosophy. On the other hand, the great and unphilosophic mass are accustomed to receive these narratives rather in their worst sense, and to learn one of these two things: either to despise the gods as beings who wallow in the grossest licentiousness, or not to restrain themselves from what is most abominable and abandoned, when they see that the gods do the same."¹

1 Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation, p. 37.

The impotency of the philosophers' efforts to benefit mankind by the promulgation of truth was due to many unavoidable defects. In the first place, they were unable to arrive at anything like a uniform understanding of truth and human duty. So the line of philosophic thought bifurcated in its chief representatives and grew further apart in their successors. Thus, the Epicureans believed that the duty of man was to seek for happiness and that happiness was to be found in pleasure; but disregarding some of the finer distinctions in the doctrine made by their founder, they were inclined to interpret it in a liberal manner, giving themselves over to voluptuous indulgence. The Stoics, on the other hand, believed in an austere life of self-denial. With the moralists disagreeing and sometimes warring among themselves, their efforts could not be expected to produce a very noticeable effect for good upon the ignorant superstitious populace.

But one of the most serious obstacles to a reformation through philosophical instruction lay in the absence of an authority to make these teachings obligatory. Had they even succeeded in finding the truth and proclaiming it uniformly, their precepts could have carried with them only the weight of human authority, and such authority

is not sufficient to obligate the conscience. Conscience, we have shown, is a constituent of the religious nature, and religion presupposes superhuman authority; therefore the conscience refuses to act in its executive capacity when precepts are not sanctioned by the intellect as proceeding from a divine source. What was believed to be the will of the gods, however absurd in reality, would obligate the conscience of a heathen; while a violation of the most worthy precept of the philosopher, known to proceed only from a human source, would cause no action of the moral sensibility. What man could possibly feel remorse or strong compunction of conscience for having disregarded an ethical precept of Aristotle? He might be intellectually convinced that it would be for his best good to observe it, but he could never feel that he had committed a serious offense in violating it, unless he could be induced to believe that it was an authoritative expression of the will of some higher power.

The greatest difficulty, however, is found in the utter inability of human instruction to change the moral disposition of men. Good moral teaching alone can not effect this transformation. Of all the religious systems of the world, Christianity alone excepted, Buddhism probably presents the

grandest ethical standard. A few verses selected from the famous poem "Light of Asia," by Edwin Arnold, will illustrate its doctrine in this respect.

"Evil swells the debt to pay,
 Good delivers and acquits;
 Shun evil, follow good; hold sway
 Over thyself. This is the WAY.

"Naught from the helpless gods by gift and hymn
 Nor bribe with blood, nor feed with fruits and
 cakes:
 Within yourselves deliverance must be sought;
 Each man his prison makes.

* * * * *

"The third is sorrow's ceasing. This is peace
 To conquer love of self and lust of life,
 To tear deep-rooted passion from the breast,
 To still the inward strife;

"For love, to clasp Eternal Beauty close;
 For glory, to be lord of self; for pleasure,
 To live beyond the gods; for countless wealth,
 To lay up lasting treasure.

"Of perfect service rendered, duties done
 In charity, soft speech, and stainless days;
 These riches shall not fade away in life
 Nor any death dispraise.

"Then sorrow ends, for life and death have ceased;
 How should lamps flicker when their oil is spent?
 The old sad count is clear, the new is clean;
 Thus hath a man content."

This is a beautiful moral standard; but, alas!
 how is sinful man to attain unto it? Buddhism

furnishes no living God to reach down his arms of love and lift man from the slough of moral corruption into which he has fallen. It only tells him of the lofty place where he ought to stand, without infusing into his heart a love for the right. The insufficiency of such a system is shown by the fact that the hundreds of millions of believers in Buddhism have never been able to reach the standard, but are to this day cursed with ignorance, superstition, and moral defilement.

Such has been the failure of all philosophy concerning good through all the ages—it could not transform the affections of men from the love of sin to the love of righteousness. All the baser passions of his nature warred against a standard of right-doing. As Pythagoras is reported to have said:

“A fatal inbred strife doth lurk within,
The cause of all this misery and sin.”

And Seneca of Rome, one of the most excellent moralists—judging from his precepts only—that heathenism has produced, asserts, “It was the complaint of our ancestors, as it is our own, it will be that of posterity, that morals are subverted, that corruption reigns.” Again, he says: “The human mind is by nature perverse, and strives for what is forbidden. Our fault is not external to us,

it is within us; and it cleaves to our souls!" Wretched man! The Hebrew prophet scarcely describes man's condition in better words: "Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? Then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil." Jer. 13:23.

In the following chapter we shall find that a strong element of a positive character is required in order to effect moral restoration. Intellectual culture alone does not suffice; for the testimony of history shows that men of the greatest intellectual attainments have been of evil and immoral character. Xerxes was a mental genius, yet he was a wretched tyrant, heartless and cruel. Alexander the Great, who had for his preceptor the immortal Aristotle, possessed tremendous abilities and conquered the world; yet he was a moral degenerate, and he died at the age of thirty-two of a fever resulting from his drunken revelries. Nero was a pupil of Seneca, but a more abandoned profligate and dissolute character has never walked the earth. Robert Burns, the gifted poet, "failed not to put in practise one part at least of his ribald song, 'to riot all the night.'" Goethe, excellent philosopher and poet though he was, restrained not the fierce passions of his nature, but "trifled with female affections" for years. And Byron was a

noble spirit, but prone to wander in the ways of evil. Surely the great apostle to the Gentiles uttered the truth when he said, "The world by wisdom knew not God."

"Surely if there ever was an opportunity for man to do without an outward revelation from God, it was in the heydays of Greece, when such a galaxy of genius adorned the world as has never been surpassed in after-times. If human philosophy could regenerate mankind, surely the country of Plato and Socrates, of Aristotle and Pythagoras, would have become a model of virtue. And we do not deny that the Hellenic soil brought forth some choice fruits. It nourished a heroic patriotism which still, after the lapse of two thousand years, makes the pulse bound at the names of Marathon and Thermopylæ; it covered the land with the most lovely creations of art, and in the wide sphere of intellectual achievement it erected monuments that will last while the world endures. But the genius of Greece lamentably failed when it came to expound the relations of God to man; its force was destructive, not constructive. It exploded the airy fabrics of primeval nature-worship; it expelled the Dryads from the woods and the Naiads from the fountains; it dethroned the Thunderer, and turned the laugh against gloomy

Dis; but it could not construct a new religion; it failed utterly to erect any bulwark against the tide of human passion, and did not stop for a day the decay of Grecian morals.”¹

Thus, all the influences of the developing intellectual faculties failed to rescue the society of Greece from the awful current of immorality that was sweeping it onward to destruction.

In concluding this chapter let us take a glance at the powerful influences for evil that were operating with the public sanction. Although the scene is not pleasing, it will impress upon the mind more effectively the utter failure of man in his best estate to redeem himself. A description of Roman morals will be reserved for a future chapter, but they were no improvement on Grecian morals—worse rather than better.

The city of Corinth was devoted to the worship of Venus, the goddess of love—more properly *lust*. The historian is obliged to draw the veil over the deeds of darkness done in her honor; in fact, the most honored persons in the city were the sacred prostitutes consecrated to her worship. According to Strabo, one temple possessed one thousand of these prostitutes. Such a thing in Corinth as

¹ Samuel Smith, *Credibility of the Christian Religion*, pp. 19, 20.

female virtue was scarcely known. Solon, the venerated Grecian sage and legislator, allowed in his laws that there should be "brothels and prostitution." According to the laws of Lycurgus, in Sparta, stealing was protected and encouraged, punishment being administered only if one was so unskilful as to be caught in the act; weak children were exposed to the wild beasts on the mountains; and rape was frequently ordered by the citizens in order to replenish the inhabitants after a war.

In Athens, the very center of intellectual activity and culture, the lawful wife was practically relegated to the position of a slave, while the husband sought companionship with a brilliant, intellectual class of women known as hetairai; and Demosthenes, in a speech, said that every Athenian husband had his hetaira, or other wife. Lucian, on the basis of a public rumor, even charged Socrates with "lending" his wife Xanthippe to Alcibiades, his pupil; and "it is certain that the philosopher's familiarities with the learned courtesan, Aspasia, has in better times covered his name with a heavy burden of suspicion, if not of scandal." If these reports are true, perhaps, after all, Xanthippe had some cause for the irritability of temper which caused her husband so much domestic infelicity!

But Athenian society was generally corrupt. I

can not do better than to quote the words of Tefft on this point: "Think of their fine arts—their naked statuary, their lascivious paintings, their seductive poetry, their music accompanied by perfectly nude dancers, all devoted to the propagation of corrupt thoughts and practises, making such an exhibition as that of Phryne in the presence of the best society of all Greece possible. The story of this Phryne is, that, for a certain consideration, she was to divest herself of all her clothing, and, from a lofty elevation, descend slowly into the margin of the sea, in imitation of the imaginary return of Venus to her native element. Her beauty, like that of Venus, was the marvel of her generation; and this act, decked out in all the splendor of the highest Greek art and skill, so well able to fit all the accompaniments to the lewd occasion, was actually performed under the close observation of men, women, girls, and little children, who, standing along the shore, made the welkin ring to their plaudits when the feat was over."¹

1 *Evolution and Christianity*, pp. 418, 419.

CHAPTER V.

ESSENTIAL CHARACTER OF A DIVINE
REVELATION.

With the proof that all the light that is subjectively revealed in the human consciousness is not sufficient to regenerate mankind, we have established the necessity of an objective revelation; that is, a revelation made *to* man. We have seen that faith is blind, embracing with equal tenderness the false as well as the true; that conscience follows and is dependent on faith; and that reason has never been able to devise and enforce a perfect standard for the moral elevation of the race. Therefore man must remain in doubt and error, groping his way in darkness, unless a supernatural light from on high shine on his clouded intellect and illuminate his benighted soul. This need has been so clearly apparent that all through the ages impostors and self-deceived enthusiasts have laid claim to miraculous powers or superhuman authority in order to obligate the conscience of the people by their teachings and thus to institute new religions. The philosophers themselves admitted the force of this principle, and therefore Socrates "expressed the conviction that

a direct revelation is among the most probable and possible, as it is among the most indispensable, of heaven's gifts." In his "Dialogue on the Duties of Religious Worship," Plato records the following conversation between Socrates and Alcibiades:

Socrates—"To me it seems best to be quiet; it is necessary to wait till you learn how you ought to behave toward the gods and toward men."

Alcibiades—"When, O Socrates, shall that time be, and who will instruct me? for most willingly would I see this man, who he is."

Socrates—"He is one who cares for you; but, as Homer represents Minerva as taking away darkness from the eyes of Diomedes, that he might distinguish a god from a man, so it is necessary that he should first take away the darkness from your mind, and then bring near those things by which you shall know good and evil."

Alcibiades—"Let him take away, if he will, the darkness or any other thing: for I am prepared to decline none of those things which are commanded by him, whoever this man is, if I shall be made better."¹

And Plato himself felt the need of superhuman assistance, for he "more than once betrays his

1 As quoted by Wakefield, *Christian Theology*, p. 33.

longing for a divine helper. The obstacles to virtue, as he says, are great, and insurmountable to feeble man. Plato admits it with a spirit of sadness, and says it is the work of God to restore fallen humanity." In his "Second Book of the Republic" he utters words that seem almost prophetic of a future Redeemer.²

Clement appears to have regarded the philosophers as having been inspired, for he refers to them as being "illuminated by the dawn of light"; and again he says, "So, then, the barbarian and Hellenic philosophy has torn off a fragment of eternal truth."³ But these opinions regarding objective revelation probably were not the result of direct inspiration, for the philosophers themselves claimed no such help, but were doubtless the deductions of the human reason based on a deep knowledge of man's constitutional make-up and requirements, connected with their conception of a beneficent God.

Starting with the premise of a beneficent All-Father who desires the greatest good of the human race, and admitting the full extent of man's sinfulness and inability to extricate himself from his

² See Clement of Alexandria, *Stromata*, Book V, Chap. XIV, for this and other references to a coming Redeemer; in *Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Chas. Scribner's Sons, New York), Vol. II.

³ *Stromata*, Book I, Chap. XIII.

fallen condition, let us proceed by a deductive process to outline the necessary characteristics of an effective revelation.

1. It must supply that lack in all human systems—a *knowledge of the relation of men to God and to each other*. We have seen that on this point the philosophers signally failed, being unable to provide a proper rule even of human duty.

2. It must necessarily be accommodated to the human condition and understanding. It is evident that man can not rise to the heights of the Infinite, and therefore the Divine would be expected to condescend to the plane of humanity.

3. Such a revelation must be *authoritative* in order to form the basis of a religious system that will obligate the conscience and thus enforce its requirements; for we have already observed that unless a moral code is sanctioned by the intellect as having proceeded from an authoritative source, conscience refuses to perform its executive work; in other words, human precepts can not obligate the conscience. Thus, it is said that "Colton wrote more moral maxims than any other man of his age, and violated them all."

4. It must be *supernaturally revealed* in order to receive the sanction of intellect as an authorita-

tive expression of the divine will. There are men who profess to believe in religion and yet seek to eliminate from its account all idea of the miraculous. A moment's reflection, however, ought to convince any one that such a course would prove the negation of all positive religion. As he is mentally constituted, man can not possibly believe a thing to be of divine authorship if it bears no stamp of superhuman power. So well is this principle understood that religious founders all through the ages have laid claim to miraculous powers. When, therefore, these miraculous powers are believed to exist, the followers can not avoid regarding their leader as a minister of God bearing an authoritative message; and this belief in his instruction and its origin obligates their consciences accordingly. But if subsequent investigation reveals the fact that the entire proceeding was an extravagant assumption, intellect revolts, faith finally acknowledges the deception that she embraced, conscience refuses longer to enforce its claims, and the whole system falls to the ground inert and lifeless. Therefore it is clear that an effective revelation from the Almighty must be accompanied by some form of supernatural manifestations.

5. In order to be adapted to the universal pur-

pose of elevating mankind from the lowest state of sin and ignorance to the highest pinnacle of purity and knowledge of the truth, it must necessarily be *a gradual revelation*. Substantial progress is not the result of sudden, fitful leaps, but is a continual development. Man's nature is such that the acquisition of all knowledge must of necessity be progressive, and not spasmodic. The hive-bee, with wonderful instinct, apparently inherits about all of its stock of knowledge and seems to be able to construct its first honey-cells with as much precision and accuracy as the more experienced workers. No apparent difference can be detected between the work of the first dam constructed by a beaver and the work of his older associates. And a young chicken, it is said, will "pick up and swallow a fly, but cautiously avoid a bee of the same size and nearly the same form." By some means their knowledge seems to be handed down from generation to generation by inheritance. But with man the case is entirely different. He inherits none of the acquired knowledge of his parents, but he receives instead something which none of the animal creation possesses and which a certain writer describes as "*an almost unlimited blank capacity of being taught.*"¹ From being at

1 Wilford Hall, *Problem of Human Life*, p. 427.

his birth about the least knowing of animal creatures he arises to the marvelous intellectual development of a Newton, a Humboldt, or a Bacon. Now, as this is the order of individual progress, so, also, is it the law of national and universal development. And if mental or intellectual advancement must be by easy steps, it is evident that moral, religious, and spiritual truth, which must first be comprehended and sanctioned by the mind in order to become an object of faith and conscience, *must of necessity be revealed gradually*. An ignorant, sin-bound savage can no more comprehend or appreciate the more advanced principles of spiritual truth than an infant can recite the multiplication table. Progressive instruction consistent with his condition is required.

6. A revelation from God adequate to the needs of the race must be adapted to *change the moral disposition of man*. It will not be denied that this is a requirement of exceeding importance. A failure to accomplish this purpose is the common defect of every human religion and belief. Whatever excellencies they may possess, without exception they fail in this one point and therefore become guilty of all; for of what practical worth are systems of doctrine, however grand, and moral precepts, however pure and lovely, if there is no

accompanying power to produce their realization in the outward life? We have seen that the philosophers and the moralists sadly acknowledge the depravity of man—that the evil inheres in his nature and cleaves to his soul. Unhappy man! He loves to do evil; his affections run toward wicked things. How can his disposition be so transformed as to hate the very things that he now loves? The answer is found in the following affirmation.

7. It is essential that *a holy object of worship, kindly disposed toward the human race*, be placed before sinful man as the subject of his devotions. On this point man has utterly failed to supply his need; for instead of furnishing gods of purity and of love, he has, to quote again the words of Cicero, “transferred human sins to the gods, and then experienced again the necessary reaction.” But even if man were able to form the concept of a holy God, that belief would not alter his nature to holiness and love for him. Such a transformation can be effected only by the manifestation of holy, divine love for fallen man, a revelation which, when impressed powerfully upon the soul, draws its wandering affections back to the source of all good. The more the mind dwells upon the moral purity of such a loving, worthy object of devo-

tion, the stronger will be its appreciation of such a beautiful character; and such contemplation and worship reacts upon the soul in love for holiness and hatred toward sin. And when this principle of pure love is received, the long pondered question of human duty is nearly solved. Plato clearly saw the need of brotherly love, but failed to find the way to produce it; for in his "Republic," describing an ideal state, he suggests that there be a community of wives, in order that the men might feel their equality and learn to love each other as brethren. It is imperative, therefore, that a divine revelation, in order to be effective, must make prominent the holiness of God and his love for sinful man; for only such a manifestation is able, in the nature of things, to accomplish his redemption.

8. Finally, it is necessary that such manifestations of the divine to man *be expressed in writing and preserved*. It is not probable that the Almighty would make revelations to all men equally, but only on special occasions and under certain favorable circumstances. We have already shown that supernatural manifestations are necessary in order to assure men of the direct action of God. Now, if such displays of the divine power were made to all men alike, they would lose their mi-

raculous character in the human estimation and sink to the level of a common phenomenon; and thus the object of their exhibition would be defeated. And if there is this necessary economy in the display of the divine powers, it is evident that such manifestations must be narrated in written form in order that the facts be kept inviolate. This thought is all the more convincing in the light of the proposition already advanced—that any successful scheme for the redemption of man must be made known gradually in accommodation to his constitutional requirements.

But the evidences in favor of a written revelation are conclusive when we consider that almost the entire general progress of the race, socially, morally, and intellectually, hinges upon the development of language and of the art of writing. Darwin says, "A complex train of thought can no more be carried on without the aid of words, whether spoken or silent, than a long calculation without the use of figures or algebra."¹ Sussmilch long ago argued that language was impossible without thought and that abstract thought was impossible without language. But we may safely assert that the advancement both of thought and of language is largely dependent upon writing; for

1 Descent of Man, p. 85.

written documents conserve the knowledge and the attainments of the past, leaving the intellect free to pursue its course in quest of new triumphs. If it were not for our ability to put thoughts on paper, the reader would not now be considering these propositions upon which the mind of the writer has been engaged. And if the revelations of God made to men were not reduced to writing, their force and authority would inevitably become dissipated through succeeding generations by the inability of oral tradition to transmit them unimpaired.

This necessity of the faithful preservation of religious ideas is so clearly evident that most of the religions whose devotees have advanced sufficiently in intellectual knowledge to make their recording possible have their sacred written narratives or books of religion. To illustrate this point, I need but refer to the Nine Classics of the Chinese, the Tablets and Prisms of the Chaldeans, the Vedas of the Hindus, the Zend-Avesta of the Persians, and the Koran of the Mohammedans.

Now, in the light of all these deductions—these necessary requirements of universal humanity—let me ask, Has such a revelation been given? The answer is found in that revelation which God made to Israel and through Israel to the world—

THE CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES. No other religion meets all these requirements of the human constitution; therefore *the religion of the Bible is the only true religion.*

“ ’Tis revelation satisfies all doubts,
Explains all mysteries except her own,
And so illuminates the pathway of life
That fools discover it, and stray no more.”
—Cowper.

We wish to observe, however, that the Bible is only a record of the divine revelation. As Professor Drummond has said, “The Bible came out of religion, not religion out of the Bible. The Bible is a product of religion, not a cause of it.”¹ But this sacred record of the divine manifestations upon which the Christian religion is based contains blessed promises of what God will yet accomplish in behalf of the race, and therefore the WORD comes to us as a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path. Psa. 119:105.

Since this revelation alone meets the religious requirements of mankind and endures every rational test, we accept it as of divine origin, and from this time forward we shall appeal to the Bible as an authoritative standard.

¹ Drummond's Addresses, p. 331.

CHAPTER VI.

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ABRAHAM.

We now come directly to a consideration of the revelation which God has given to man. After the fall in Eden, God, according to the record in Genesis, made himself known in some manner to the antediluvians. During that period, however, we discover but few indications of any future plan of redemption. But coming forward to the time of Abraham, we find a wonderful revelation of his future workings made known unto that patriarch. With the departure of Abram from Ur of the Chaldees, Hebrew history opens, and a new era of heavenly inspiration begins. This introduction is set forth in beautiful words in a prayer offered by his descendants in the days of Nehemiah: "Thou art the Lord the God, who didst choose Abram, and broughtest him forth out of Ur of the Chaldees, and gavest him the name of Abraham: and *foundest his heart faithful before thee*, and MADEST A COVENANT WITH HIM." Neh. 9:7, 8.

The Chaldeans, we know, were idol-worshippers. How Abraham, under polytheistic surroundings and influences, came to be a faithful man, with a

knowledge of the one true God, the sacred narrative does not inform us; but a venerable tradition represents him as turning from their custom-sanctioned idolatrous worship to a simpler and purer faith. "The mythical story of his conversion is not without beauty and instructiveness. It represents Terah, his father, as a maker of wooden idols; and shows how the son's antagonism to the corruption of religion, which the business symbolized, developed and culminated. Being left one day in charge of the stock in trade, Abraham was profoundly impressed at the folly and superstition of a woman, who devoutly brought food to satisfy the hunger of *things*, which though they had mouths, could not eat, and which were as unable to appreciate gifts as they were to appropriate them. But his indignation grew fiercer, and his views of duty clearer, when an aged man entered his tent and desired to purchase of his wares.

" 'How old art thou?'

" 'Threescore years.'

" 'What, three score years!' answered Abraham, 'and thou wouldst worship a thing that my father's slaves made in a few hours? Strange that a man of sixty should bow his gray head to a creature such as that.'

“Unable longer to restrain his scorn, and reason asserting its sovereignty over conflicting doubts, after the departure of his would-be customer he broke all the idols to pieces except one. The largest one he spared, and placed in its hands the hammer which had served him in his iconoclasm. When Terah returned, he was filled with horror and consternation at the work of destruction which he beheld, and angrily demanded the name of the irreverent wretch who had dared to raise his impious arm against the gods.

“‘Why,’ quietly replied the then youthful patriarch, ‘during thine absence a woman brought them food, and the younger and smaller ones immediately began to eat. The older and stronger god, enraged at their unmannerly boldness, took the hammer which you see in his hands, and crushed them all before him.’

“‘Dost thou deride thine aged father?’ cried Terah. ‘Do I not know that they can neither move nor eat?’

“‘And yet thou worshipest them,’ exclaimed Abraham; ‘and thou wouldst have me worship them as well.’

“‘This rebuke was too much for the outraged parent, and, consequently, according to the legend, he sent the wayward youth to the king for admoni-

tion and correction. When Nimrod heard the account of his infidelity and impiety, instead of condemning him hastily and harshly, he sought to win him to some form of faith.

“‘If thou canst not adore the idols fashioned by thy father,’ said the accommodating monarch, ‘then pray to fire.’

“‘Why not to water, which will quench the fire?’

“‘Be it so; pray to water.’

“‘But why not to the clouds, which hold the water?’

“‘Well, then, pray to the clouds.’

“‘Why not to the winds which drive the clouds before them?’

“‘Certainly, please yourself; pray to the winds.’

“‘Be not angry, O king,’ finally replied Abraham. ‘I can not pray to the fire, or the water, or the clouds, or the winds, but to the Creator who made them: him only will I worship.’ Neither would he be persuaded to adore the sun, moon, and stars, for he discerned that they were not stationary, and he said, as he contemplated the heavens, ‘I like not things that set; these glittering orbs are not gods, as they are subject to law: I will worship him only whose law they obey.’ ”¹

1 Lorimer, *Isms Old and New*, pp. 41, 42.

Whether Abraham really was an idolater in his youth and afterwards turned from idol-worship, we can not say positively; but according to Josh. 24:2 his father was an idol-worshiper. It is probable that the knowledge and the worship of the one true God was handed down through a continuous succession of monotheistic believers until this time; for Abraham was born only two years after the death of Noah, being the tenth generation from Shem and the twentieth from Adam, according to the genealogy in Genesis. Of so much we are certain from the inspired narrative—Abraham during his lifetime enjoyed such close association with the Almighty “that he was called the friend of God,” and that he was separated from his evil contemporaries in order to start a new nation so as to preserve the knowledge and the worship of the one true God in the world. Though polytheism reigned everywhere, yet we have good grounds for believing that back of all the world’s idolatry there existed a primitive monotheism. As Naville is reported to have said, “The idea of one God is primitive and fundamental; polytheism is derived. A forgotten monotheism slumbers under the multiform worship. It is the secret stock from which the latter grew; but the exuberant offspring consumed the whole strength of the parent tree.”

We are aware that some scholars assert that the original religions of the world were idolatrous, but such conclusions are based principally upon the most ancient records of heathen nations obtainable at the present time. If a pure monotheism existed primitively, the knowledge of it would probably be lost among those nations that drifted entirely into heathenism; for, the art of writing being unknown in those early times, there would have been no successful way of transmitting it, except orally among a people that remained uncorrupted. Numerous scholars, however, maintain that there is a strong presumption in favor of a primitive unity of belief in the fact that the ancient designations of Deity—the Greek *Zeus*, the Sanskrit *Deva*, the Gothic *Tius*, the Latin *Deus*, the Scandinavian *Tyr*, the old German *Ziu*, and the Anglo-Saxon *Tiu*—are doubtless kindred in origin, proceeding from the same stock. Robert Flint gives us a long list of scholars of consummate ability who assert primitive monotheism.¹ Among the number appears such names as Rawlinson, Gladstone, Herbert, Bryant, and Cudworth.

But who can read the book of Genesis and fail to see that the God of heaven stands revealed in a class by himself, even in the first few chapters,

1 *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Art. Theism.

during man's primitive state? The narrative of his dealings with men contained therein was preserved in some manner (probably orally among monotheistic believers, as before mentioned) until it could be committed to writing.

The idea of a primitive monotheism from which man departed when he fell away into sin is likewise asserted by the apostle Paul, who, in describing the condition of the heathen nations, says: "*When they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four-footed beasts, and creeping things. . . . Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshiped and served the creature more than the Creator.*" Rom. 1: 21-25.

If this original knowledge of God had not been conserved in the family of Abraham, it is probable that the entire world would have been plunged into the depths of heathenism. And if with the progress of intellectual development they should have arisen subsequently to the point of despising even the highest form of polytheism, in the ab-

sence of a positive authoritative religion they would probably have gone onward into general skepticism.

The Scriptural narrative of the call of Abraham opens with the words: "Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. . . . And in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." Gen. 12: 1-3. Following this instruction, he departed, and came into the land of Canaan. "And the Lord said unto Abram . . . Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art northward and southward and eastward and westward: for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed." Chap. 13: 14, 15. "And the Lord brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them; and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be." Chap. 15: 5. "In the same day the Lord made a covenant with Abram, saying, Unto thy seed have I given this land, from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates." Ver. 18.

"And when Abram was ninety years old and

nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. . . . And I will establish my covenant between me and thee and thy seed after thee in their generations for an everlasting covenant, to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee. And I will give unto thee, and to thy seed after thee, the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession." Gen. 17:1-8. "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Chap. 22:18.

The foregoing Scriptures include the principal promises contained in the Abrahamic covenant. On examination, we find that the subject bifurcates, two great divisions being manifest. The first section relates to Abraham and his literal descendants—"I will multiply thee exceedingly"; "I will make of thee a great nation." And connected with this, stands the promise of their lit-

eral inheritance of the land of Canaan—"Unto thy seed have I given this land." The second division is of world-wide importance—"I will make thee a father of many nations"; "and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed"; "in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice."

The full significance of these promises to the ancient patriarch can be realized only in the light of their fulfilment; therefore it will be necessary here to anticipate the future subject of the present work by a reference to subsequent history.

It is not too much to say that in the Abrahamic covenant was given a delineation and a promise of all God's future relations with the human race—an abridgment or summary, so to speak, of his plans. As the sculptor forms a plastic model as a pattern of his subsecutive working; so the Almighty, having in view the manner of his future dealings with humanity, gave this patriarchal covenant as an epitome of his plan. Its two great divisions contained potentially two forces whose influences have since been felt throughout the world. As one writer has well said, "They are the fountains of two streams of promises, prophecies, and histories, which, from that moment, began to flow, and whose waters meander through all

ages, and disembody themselves at last into the vast ocean of eternity.”¹

The first branch of this comprehensive prophecy deals with the future history of the Abrahamic descendants, thus embracing the law system, or “old covenant,” their possession of Canaan, etc. As the experiences of the Israelites are to be considered in the next two chapters, we will pass over that part of the subject at present, merely pausing long enough to affirm that the entire legal economy of that dispensation was designed to be temporary, preparative for something greater.

In the second division we find promises of a universal nature, for they embrace all the nations of the earth. This section meets its fulfilment under the gospel dispensation in the “new covenant,” and this glorious realization may all be summed up in the one word CHRISTIANITY. The apostle Paul says, “And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.” Gal. 3: 8.

We wish to observe that both of these covenants were prefigured in Abraham himself. Because of

1 Riggle, Kingdom of God, p. 113.

his unwavering faith, justifying righteousness was imputed to him, and he was called "the friend of God." In this character he stands at the head of all true believers in God—thus prefiguring the Christian covenant—and he therefore merits the designation "father of the faithful." He afterwards received the rite of circumcision—thus prefiguring the law of "works"—but it was only a "seal of the righteousness of the faith" which he had before his circumcision, and was given in order "that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed to them also: and the father of circumcision to them who are not of the circumcision only, but who also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had being yet uncircumcised." Rom. 4:11, 12. Thus, he represents both dispensations.

If this venerable patriarch received through righteousness and faith a promise and pledge of the gospel, why, then, should the law of works, which was represented by his circumcision, be given at all, or why should it come first in the order of fulfilment? The answer is given by the apostle, "It was added because of transgressions, until the seed should come to whom the promise was made" (Gal. 3:19), or until the time should

arrive for the fulfilment of the second part, which was to come with the appearance of the "seed unto whom the promise was made."

"For the promise that he should be the heir of the world, was not to Abraham, or to his seed, through the law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if they which are of the law be heirs, faith is made void, and the promise made of none effect. . . . Therefore it is of faith, that it might be by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all (as it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations)." Rom. 4:13-17. It is apparent that in the mind of the apostle the chief burden of the Abrahamic covenant lies, not in its literal fulfilment under the law, but in its spiritual fulfilment under the gospel. The promise of a universal blessing was not to come by his seed through the law, yet "to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, *which is Christ*." "That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; *that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith*." Gal. 3:16, 14. "And this I say, that the covenant [of

Abraham concerning a universal spiritual blessing] that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, can not disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect." Ver. 17.

The law system, which was parenthetically introduced between the giving of the universal promise and its fulfilment, had its part in preparing the way for Christ, as we shall see in a future chapter; but it was in its very nature temporary, and the time arrived when the divine manifestations could no longer be confined to the literal seed of Abraham; and now, thank God! "the children of the promise are counted for the seed" (Rom. 9: 8), "even us, whom he hath called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles." Ver. 26. "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Gal. 3: 29.

How clear the thought that the redemption plan was made known unto that worthy progenitor of Israel! To this fact Christ himself bore witness in the words, "Abraham rejoiced to see my day; and he saw it, and was glad." John 8: 56.

In the book of Hebrews the apostle designates the law system a "shadow of good things to come." Heb. 10: 1. It will be noticed that this

is just the reverse of their order as prefigured in Abraham; for the gospel was represented in him first, by his faith and righteousness, and the law secondly, by his circumcision. The divine plan of redemption which shone from heaven on that ancient worthy necessarily cast its shadow of the law *on this side of him*; but it is manifest that in the ascending scale the order must be reversed, for in approaching a light we always encounter the shadows before reaching the substantial objects that project them. But shadows have at least this value: they proclaim unmistakably the *reality of their object and the existence of a light somewhere*.

“Thus shadow owes its birth to light.”

—Gay.

CHAPTER VII.

THE REVELATION TO ISRAEL.

Reference has already been made to the fact that the knowledge of the one true and living God was conserved, during a polytheistic age, in the family of Abraham. But more than this, the Almighty designed to begin with the Israelitish nation a series of divine manifestations and revelations preparatory to the establishment of the most glorious religion possible to mankind, a religion whose ultimate object is to bless and elevate all the nations of the earth. In the providence of God, Israel was to become the instructor of the human race.

In our consideration of the necessity and the requirements of an objective revelation we saw that such a manifestation of the divine could not in the nature of things be given universally and that therefore it would probably be restricted to a limited number under favorable circumstances. Now we wish to show that in the case of the Israelites just such favorable circumstances occurred. The devout believer, however, feels inclined to attribute even those propitious external conditions to providential care. One can hardly read the narra-

tive of Joseph—his mistreatment at the hands of his brethren, his servitude and final exaltation in Egypt—and of the chain of events that culminated in the migration of the family of Jacob to the land of the Pharoahs, without feeling a conviction that the hand of God was at work, paving the way for the manifestation of his glorious power.

If one nation was to become the repository of that truth which was finally to be perfected and made known unto all nations, it was necessary that it should, by some special means, be permanently separated from all others. It may be objected, however, that "God's having singled out the Jews as a people to be so peculiarly and divinely favored was an unjust discrimination against other nations not in keeping with fatherly benevolence. There are valid reasons, however, even from a human standpoint, why the Jews or some other nation should have been chosen as the repository of the sublime truth of *monotheism*. It is known to every reader of history that at the time of Moses the whole world had gone into polytheism. Nor can any one know the universality of idolatry, the extent to which it was practised, and the consequent degradation of the race, without realizing the utterly hopeless condition of man-

kind unless they were relieved of such an intolerable burden of superstition. Nor, further, can we conceive of a method more divinely wise than that which seeks to lift the burden by establishing the fundamental doctrine of unmixed monotheism—the doctrine which is . . . the foundation of all true religion, and the secret power which elevates the race. If from benevolent design God planned to save our race from the burden of polytheism and idolatry, the first step to be taken was to prepare a nation to be the repository of the fundamental truth of one God.

“It must be apparent to the observing mind that such an undertaking, in the face of a polytheistic world and of the freedom of the human mind, was an all-important but most difficult task. God, purposing to save man by *man*, began, as seems most reasonable, by training a nation, whose sublime mission should be to establish the foundation truth of one God. This training was many-sided, and of long duration. It began in the patriarchal age with Abraham, who, in the disgusting and sickening presence of polytheistic idolatry, maintained the doctrine and worship of one God. This was instilled into the mind of his son Isaac, who transmitted it to the patriarch Jacob, and through him it became the divine legacy of Joseph

and his brethren, who transplanted it as a tree to the Egyptian soil, where it was divinely watered as with the dews of Hermon.

"For four hundred and fifty years, while Israel's posterity was under the yoke of bondage, this foundation truth of monotheism was maintained upon Egyptian soil.¹ Nor was this yoke unimportant in protecting this fundamental thought from being swallowed up by the idolatry which was everywhere prevalent in Egypt. Had Joseph and his posterity been free to mingle in the society of the Egyptians on the ground of social equality, they would have abandoned their doctrine of one God and gone wholly into poly-

1 This author, it seems, must have intended to indicate the commonly allotted period of four hundred and thirty years for the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt, instead of four hundred and fifty years. Some scholars, however, are of the opinion that the period of involuntary servitude was much shorter. The apostle Paul (Gal. 3:17) appears to refer to the entire period from the giving of the Abrahamic covenant until the Exodus as being but four hundred and thirty years, and in this case their stay in Egypt could not have been much longer than two hundred years. The Septuagint rendering of Ex. 12:40, 41 also makes the four hundred and thirty years to cover both their stay in Canaan before the migratory period and their subsequent dwelling in Egypt, thus: "And the sojourning of the children of Israel, while they sojourned in the land of Egypt and the land of Canaan, was four hundred and thirty years. And it came to pass after the four hundred and thirty years, all the forces of the Lord came forth out of the land of Egypt by night." The fact that they were to come out of Egypt "in the fourth generation (Gen. 15:16)" also favors the short-time period.

theistic worship. Even ostracized from society as they were, their coming in contact more or less with idolatry had its effect upon the unmixed monotheism which the family of Jacob transported to that land of thirty thousand gods."¹

When we consider the special preparatory course that God had for the instruction of this people, the necessity of their isolation becomes apparent. Balaam represented the true condition of this peculiar nation when he said, "Lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations." Num. 23:9. In this exclusiveness lay their protection largely. A policy of free intercourse with the surrounding sinful nations would have proved their ruin, resulting in disintegration, loss and decay of their religious ideals, and the thwarting of God's plan of gradual revelation.

But such exclusiveness, it is evident, could not have been maintained without the strongest bonds of union existing within the nation itself. Now, let me ask, What was there to hold this strange people together? In the first place, there existed the ties of consanguinity; for the whole nation could trace their genealogy back di-

¹ McWhinney, Reason and Revelation Hand in Hand, pp. 126-128.

rectly to Abraham, and they were proud of the fact that they were the descendants of that faithful patriarch. Such a bond of union is very strong, we know. Then, again, in Egypt the whole nation had been subjected to the most rigorous bondage and servitude, and this treatment, reducing them all to one social level, produced a common bond of fellow-feeling and sympathy which could not be easily broken. Finally, to complete their isolation, God gave them a peculiar law applicable in many respects to that one nation only. And with the conviction that they were alone favored of heaven, a feeling of spiritual pride and superiority filled up the measure of the various causes which contributed to their separate national existence.

To this day we marvel at the remarkable unity of this peculiar people; for the ties that united them seem to be indissoluble. Amid all the mutations of society, the greatest disasters that have befallen mankind, the crash of empires and the ruins of worldly kingdoms, this nation has stood. Oppressed by tyrants; plundered in warfare; sold into slavery; burned, tortured, and crucified by thousands to furnish idle amusement for spectators; suffering the greatest indignities ever endured by man in ancient times, these people have

survived and witnessed the death and burial of all those old persecutors. Driven from their beloved city; without a country or government for nearly two thousand years; despised, downtrodden, and scattered through every nation under heaven, still they survive, and bear the same characteristics as did their ancestors whose likenesses we behold in the Egyptian representations and paintings of four thousand years ago. No wonder John Henry Barrows referred to "the men and women of Israel" as "the standing miracle of nations and religions."¹

Nor is the extraordinary character of this people manifested alone in their longevity. Notwithstanding their adverse circumstances—generally ostracised by society, a "hissing and a by-word among the nations"—they have presented to the world an array of talent and genius that is marvelous. Among the scores of distinguished men of Hebrew extraction, I need refer to but a few—Geiger and Neander the historians, Mendelssohn and Rubenstein the musicians, Sterne and Herschel the astronomers, Spinoza the philosopher, Sylvester the mathematician, Rothschild the financier, and Disraeli (Lord Beaconsfield—Premier of England) the statesman. And what

1 World's Parliament of Religions, Chap. III.

shall we say of Joseph and Moses, Abraham and Elijah, Solomon and Isaiah, David and Jeremiah, Peter and Paul, Daniel and CHRIST?¹ No other nation that has ever lived on God's footstool has exerted such tremendous influence over the destinies of the human race. It is literally true that in the seed of Abraham all the nations of the earth have been blessed. Disraeli, I believe it was, declared that "one half of Christendom worships a Jew and the other half a Jewess—Jesus and Mary." While this expression is ironical, it nevertheless contains much truth. Frederick the Great asked his chaplain for the strongest argument in favor of Christianity that could be given in a word, and he received the answer, "The Jews, your majesty."

Although during the long period of Egyptian bondage the Israelites became closely united, and, groaning under their heavy burdens, cried unto the Lord for deliverance, still it is evident that they nearly lost sight of the true knowledge of the one supreme God, and became corrupted by the prevailing religious influences surrounding them. This is

1 "The Jews are among the aristocracy of every land. If a literature is called rich in the possession of a few classical tragedies, what shall we say of a national tragedy lasting for fifteen hundred years, in which the poets and the actors were also the heroes?"
—George Eliot.

shown by their subsequent proneness to idolatry. The popular Egyptian worship was disgusting and polluting in the extreme, every sort of creature, real and imaginary, being regarded as objects of religious devotion. However, there were colleges in that country, attached to the chief temples, in which the doctrine of the unity of God was taught to a certain initiated few, set forth in such words as these: "He is the only living and true God...who has made all things, and was not himself made." Hence the more enlightened had some conception of a supreme God above all the popular divinities and to him they gave the appellation Nuk Pu Nuk —*I am that I am*. In this connection it is noteworthy that when Moses received the commission to go to Israel and to Pharoah and make known the will of God unto them, he was to proclaim the Almighty under this very title, as we see by the following Scripture: "Behold when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say unto me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them? And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you." Ex. 3: 13, 14. Thus, as Smith has observed, he was "to declare that the

God of the highest Egyptian theology was also the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob. The case is parallel to that of Paul at Athens."¹

Now, when Moses and Aaron visited Egypt with a message purporting to be an expression of the will of this supreme Lord, it was essential that they should have the proof of their ministry, for it would be necessary to convince both the Israelites and the Egyptians of the reality of their divine mission. Pharaoh, evidently, would not let them go at the mere word of a man, and the Israelites themselves could hardly hope to make a successful revolt unless they felt assured that God had undertaken their cause in fulfilment of the promise of their Canaan inheritance made to Abraham and confirmed to Isaac and Jacob. We have already shown that, owing to the nature of man's present constitution, he can be convinced of the divine working only by the manifestation of some superhuman and supernatural power; hence the necessity of miracles. This great fact was recognized and provided for by the Almighty in the Mosaic commission, thus: "And the Lord spake unto Moses and unto Aaron, saying, When Pharaoh shall speak unto you, saying, Show a miracle

¹ Ancient History of the East, p. 196, note; as cited by Professor Myers.

for you: then thou shalt say unto Aaron, Take thy rod, and cast it before Pharoah, and it shall become a serpent." Ex. 7: 8, 9.

We are aware that this miraculous feature is objectionable to certain classes of men; namely, those who deny the Bible altogether, and those who, professing to respect it, seek, nevertheless, to eliminate from its account, through some method of rational interpretation, every reference to the supernatural. The latter position, taken by certain "higher critics," has done more in some respects to weaken the authority of the Bible than have the direct attacks of its avowed enemies.

Hume argued that Christianity should be rejected because it was based on miracles; for "miracles," said he, "are contrary to our firm and unalterable experience." It is surprising that a man of intelligence should deny the possibility of miracles on such grounds. If the man never lived who testified to the occurring of a supernatural event, the possibility of miracles would not be disproved thereby. A negative is generally difficult to prove. The testimony of a few creditable witnesses may be sufficient to establish a fact; while the contrary opinion of a thousand men who were not present and who had no means of knowing what occurred, would have no weight whatever as evidence.

By what means can it be shown that miracles are impossible? Some say that it is contrary to science. But it may be scientific *ignorance*, rather than scientific knowledge, that makes such a positive assertion. Can science testify positively even that life can not be generated spontaneously from not-life? No; it can not. While nearly every living scientist adheres to the doctrine of biogenesis—life only from life—still the subject is proved only so far as it is possible for a negative to be proved; and all that can be truthfully asserted is that in none of the careful and reliable experiments in that direction has such a thing been known to occur. Thus it is with the subject of miracles. Science can assert truthfully only that, so far as her present state of knowledge is concerned, she is unable to verify any such occurrences. As Dawson, the eminent geologist, has well said with reference to this subject, "Since science itself enables men to work miracles absolutely impossible and unintelligible to the ignorant, we may readily believe that the Almighty can still more profoundly modify and rearrange his own laws and forces. Viewed in this way, a miracle *is a most natural thing*, and to be expected in any case where events great and momentous are transpiring." I believe it was Horace, the Roman poet, who said, "Let

not a god intervene unless there be a knot worth his untying."

Well, we have seen that in the establishing of a new religion miracles are absolutely required in order to convince men of its divine origin; and therefore, in the case of the Israelites, there was a "knot worth his untying." To provide for this necessary manifestation of himself God caused such conditions to exist in Egypt as would naturally call forth an exhibition of his power. This is shown in his own words concerning Pharaoh, "For this cause have I raised thee up, for to show in thee my power; and that my name may be declared throughout all the earth." Ex. 9:16.

Thus, the circumstances were favorable for the interposition of God. But it is evident that any claims put forth by the Almighty would be in direct opposition to the popular divinities of the land. Therefore when Moses and Aaron began to work miracles for the purpose of convincing Pharaoh, his servants undertook to duplicate them; but when the words of the Lord's prophets turned the dust into lice, the magicians failed, and they were obliged to acknowledge, "This is the finger of God." By a series of miraculous manifestations—some of which constituted grievous plagues to the Egyptians—culminating in that terrible calamity,

the death of their first-born, the superiority of God's power over that of their gods was demonstrated and the liberation of the Israelites secured.

Now, though this succession of miracles constituted a marvelous display, convincing to the children of Israel, yet there was another necessary object connected with their manifestation besides the exhibition of divine power. This was the method that the Almighty chose to make plain *his love unto them* in order to draw their affections unto himself and thus secure obedience. Who can picture the scene or describe the joy that took possession of them on that last terrible night when, with the first-born of Egypt lying dead in every house in the land, Pharaoh suddenly commanded them to depart immediately, and they started on their long-looked-for journey to the Canaan land! Would not such a manifestation of mercy, shown in thus liberating them from their tyrant oppressors, draw out their hearts in love and obedience unto their temporal deliverer? Most assuredly. Human nature could not resist the feelings of thanksgiving and of gratitude that would arise spontaneously in the soul on such an occasion.

But at this juncture a difficulty arose. They found themselves confronted by the Red Sea. And

who can describe the consternation and dismay, the utter despair and anguish of soul, that seized upon them when they discovered that Pharaoh, bitter with disappointment at the loss of his slaves, and maddened by the dreadful calamities that had befallen his nation, and seeking revenge, was pursuing and was almost upon them? Again God's power was manifested—the waters parted, and the Israelites crossed over; and at the command of Moses the sea returned again and overthrew the pursuing host of Pharaoh in the waters. What a manifestation of the divine power! Could the fugitives behold such an awe-inspiring scene without the profoundest feelings of reverence and of love to God? Such waves of deepest gratitude, such surging billows of thankful emotion, impossible to control, found expression in the joyous “song of Moses.” “I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea. The Lord is my strength and song, and he is become my salvation; he is my God . . . and I will exalt him. . . . Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: thy right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. . . . Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders?

. . . Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation." Ex. 15:1-13.

The Passover, instituted on that last night of their sojourn in Egypt, was observed ever afterwards in commemoration of their deliverance from the last plague. And in their temple service in the promised land, many years afterwards, they sang a hymn of joy and of thanksgiving to God for deliverance from the host of Pharaoh in the Red Sea. See Psalms 136.

"*He MADE KNOWN his ways unto Moses, his acts unto the children of Israel.*" Psa. 103:7.

CHAPTER VIII.

NATURE AND OBJECT OF THE LAW.

The Israelites safely landed on the wilderness side of the Red Sea, a new epoch in their experience begins. Here the true foundation of their national history has its commencement. Moses found himself at the head of an unorganized mass of homogeneous elements, a crowd of illiterate fugitive slaves. If this was the people through whom God designed to ultimately bless the nations, it is evident that a systematic course of educational enlightenment would be required; for as regards moral ideas, responsibilities, and spiritual conceptions they were only in an infantile state. It is certain that they possessed no exalted idea of God himself, and it is highly probable that they regarded him merely as a tribal or national God. The idea that "Jehovah is the God of Israel," and "Israel is his people," was the center of their theology and the foundation of their national unity. Under the circumstances they were unable to entertain a lofty and universal conception of the Almighty. Although some of the later prophets had broader views of God, it was reserved for the gospel of Christ to make known the true spiritual

essence of his nature and its universal character, which were clearly revealed for the first time in that notable discourse delivered to the woman at the well-side in Samaria. John 4.

Before the nation could become solidified in a permanent form, it was necessary that a revelation of God's will should be made known unto them; for among all primitive peoples the relations that are believed to exist between them and their gods—that is, their systems of religion—form the basis of the administration of law and government. Now, at this period Israel could scarcely be said to possess any definite religion. They had received from their fathers a faint remembrance of the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob; but even those ideas had been more or less confounded with the popular mythology of Egypt, as the words of Moses in Ex. 3:13, 14, taken in connection with the subsequent history of this people, show. The marvelous manifestations coincident with their deliverance from bondage were sufficient to give them the idea of his mighty power, and the benevolent nature of that act doubtless convinced them of his goodness towards them. Aside from this, however, they probably knew nothing of his moral character or of the relations existing between him and man.

That they were in utter ignorance in regard to a proper manner of worshiping God is shown by their experience at Sinai at the time of the giving of the law. While Moses was delayed in the mount, the people became impatient and said unto Aaron, "Up, make us gods, which shall go before us"; and he complied with their request by making them a molten calf. It appears from the record given that it was not their intention to revert entirely to the idolatry of Egypt, but that they sought, under this similitude, to worship the God who had delivered them; for they said, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt," and Aaron set apart the following day as a "*feast to the Lord.*" On that day they "offered burnt offerings, and brought peace offerings; and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play." But God refused to accept the worship offered to him under the corrupt Egyptian form, and he was highly displeased. Ex. 32.

In all systems of religion men seek to offer up acceptable worship unto the beings they adore, and therefore their religious customs and acts are conformed to their conception of the character and will of the gods. In the human systems, however, as we have seen, men see in their gods only the projected

shadows of themselves, and therefore they attribute to their deities the faults, the failings, and the sins, that characterize fallen mankind; and, as a result, their forms of worship are frequently vile and pernicious in character. Now, if a superior religion—a divine religion—was to be established among the Jews, it is manifest that such could be instituted only through a lofty conception on their part of the moral character and will of Jehovah. But how could such an exalted view of the divine be obtained? Evidently, the only course was through a process of revelation. And all such revelation, we have previously shown, must of necessity be made known gradually and in accommodation to the human understanding. Ideas of an abstract nature can not be communicated directly to an untutored mind. An infant can not understand mathematics, the nature of sound, nor the velocity of light; but the young mind is soon able to comprehend something, and with proper development the person may become an able mathematician or scientist. We wish to note the *process* by which such individual enlightenment is made possible, because of the bearing it has on the case of the Israelites under consideration.

All instruction must come to the person through the medium of the senses. The first efforts to con-

vey ideas to the undeveloped mind is not by the use of words alone, but by *a proper exhibition of external and visible objects* designed to reveal the thoughts intended and make them impressive. Almost every one is aware of the value of images, pictures, and the like, in imparting instruction to young children. But when the ideas first conveyed through the use of these external means are definitely formed in the mind, they become the subject of reflective thought independent of all physical objects. Thus, it is a difficult matter to convey instruction of an abstract nature to one who has never possessed the ability to see or hear; while a person who has enjoyed these senses for a sufficient length of time to acquire certain definite ideas is capable of the most abstract and reflective thought even after losing sight and hearing. In other words, all individual enlightenment must proceed primarily through a medium temporary in its nature, just as the construction of the most imposing edifice requires the employment of temporary scaffolding.

Now, it is evident that the instruction of a nation in an infantile state must proceed along lines similar to those which are required in enlightening the individual. National ideas can be originated only through some external medium. If God,

therefore, designed to convey to the Hebrews information concerning his character wherein it differed from human conceptions and from the ordinary human character, such ideas would necessarily have had to be originated in their minds by some process of external manifestations impressing their senses. Such a system of instruction, however, would, in the very nature of things, have been temporary, it being employed merely for the purpose of forming definite ideas.

Turning our attention to the Israelites again, we find, in accordance with the foregoing deductions, that the revelation of the divine character and will, so far as it was made known in that age, was revealed to them through an elaborate *system of sacred symbolism*. Everywhere ceremonies, symbols, and visible manifestations abounded. One of the Greek philosophers has said that "it is difficult fully to exhibit greater things without the aid of patterns." Francis Bacon also has shown "the indispensableness of similitudes."

To illustrate the thought affirmed—that external manifestations are necessary in order to originate ideas—let us notice one point. The circumstances under which the Hebrews had been reared in Egypt gave them the lowest and basest conception of the gods; for it is well known that in the pol-

luting idolatrous worship of that land the most disgusting familiarity existed between the deities and the worshipers. Now, how could they be taught the supreme dignity and majesty and the almost unapproachable character of the Most High? Not by comparison, for nothing in existence possessed such characteristics. As the prophet said at a later date, "To whom then will ye liken God? or what likeness will ye compare unto him?" Isa. 40:18. The answer is to be found in the extraordinary manner of the divine manifestations. Though God "went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud" and "by night in a pillar of fire," yet he never condescended to a position of familiarity with them. When they came to Mount Sinai, "the Lord said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with them and believe thee forever. . . . Be ready against the third day: for the third day the Lord will come down in the sight of all the people on Mount Sinai. And thou shalt *set bounds unto the people roundabout*, saying, Take heed to yourselves, that ye come not up into the mount, or touch the border of it: whosoever toucheth the mount shall be surely put to death: there shall not an hand touch it, but he shall surely be stoned or thrust through; whether it be beast or

man it shall not live. . . . And it came to pass on the third day in the morning, that there were thunderings and lightnings, and a thick cloud upon the mount, and the voice of the trumpet exceeding loud; *so that all the people that were in the camp trembled.* And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet with God; and they stood at the nether part of the mount. And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke, because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly. . . . And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mount; and Moses went up. And the Lord said unto Moses, Go down, charge the people, *lest they break through unto the Lord to gaze, and many of them perish.*" Ex. 19:9-21.

"And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it they removed, and stood afar off. And they said unto Moses, *Speak thou with us, and we will hear; but let not God speak with us lest we die.* And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God has come to prove you, *and that his fear may be upon your faces, THAT YE SIN NOT.* And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near

unto the thick darkness where God was." Ex. 20:18-21. Such marvelous manifestations could not fail to make a most profound impression upon the mind. Adverting to this event, a New Testament writer says, "And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake." Heb. 12:21. Such a sublime and awful scene was intended to give the people a more exalted conception of the dignity and majesty of the Most High.

We now come to the consideration of an important point, doubtless the most important that Jehovah designed through the Mosaic revelation to make known to the children of Israel—the *holiness of God*. The writer, however, claims no originality in the thought itself; for McWhinney,¹ Lorimer,² Walker,³ and many other able writers have discussed the matter of this revelation of God's holiness and man's moral obligations resulting therefrom.

The religious history of our race shows, as we have observed in previous chapters, that sinful man has never been able to form a proper conception of a pure, holy object of worship. His gods have always been like himself or inferior to him-

1 Reason and Revelation Hand in Hand.

2 Isms Old and New.

3 Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation.

self. How, then, could there be formed in his mind the concept of a God of holiness? This could be accomplished, first, by the use of external *symbols* and a ceremonial service, making prominent man's moral uncleanness and his unfit condition to enjoy association with God; and, secondly, by punishments authorized by the Almighty to be administered, thus showing the opposition of his nature to sin.

These requirements were met in the law of Moses. The ritualistic service abounded in ceremonies calculated to convey to the mind of the Israelite his impurity by way of contrast with the God that he served. Thus, everything employed in divine service had to be purified and repurified in order to become fit for the sacred use. The priests constituted a separate class of holy, consecrated men. The tabernacle in which they served was dedicated and consecrated holy unto the Lord. The common people, for all their cleansing and purifying, were not considered fit to come within its sacred precincts. The priests themselves, notwithstanding their caste and consecration, were not regarded as worthy to enter its walls without previous purification; and even then they were too unclean to be allowed in the presence of God in the second room of the sanc-

tuary. Such honor was almost too much for a man to enjoy; therefore it was reserved for the high priest alone, and he might enter but once each year, after he had performed the customary purification.

The arbitrary division of animals into classes, clean and unclean, contributed to the same result. The terrible punishments administered for disobedience to the law set forth impressively the opposition of the divine Lawgiver to wrongdoing and thus revealed his character as being the opposite of sin. More than thirty crimes are enumerated for which capital punishment was inflicted. "He that despised Moses' law *died without mercy* under two or three witnesses." Heb. 10:28.

This thought of man's exceeding sinfulness in contrast with God's character was also deeply impressed upon the mind by the sacrificial offerings. Now, the law was such that men were made to feel that they deserved punishment for every misdeed; and when they were allowed to make sacrifices for their sins (such as were pardonable), they could not avoid the conviction that the victim offered up was their substitute, dying in their stead. Thus, the idea of God's holy character was clearly defined and man's sinful condition em-

phasized, by the two being placed in antithesis.¹ Furthermore, the doctrine of vicarious atonement, although perhaps as old as the race, received in this formal, divinely appointed service a degree of definiteness before unknown. And the idea of the necessity of a mediator between God and man was also clearly impressed by the institution of the Levitical priesthood. This subject could be extended indefinitely, but the limits of our space require its brief consideration.

Now, since these external forms and symbols were given for the express purpose of revealing definite spiritual ideas to Israel in its infantile state, their temporary character is apparent. Therefore, we should naturally expect such ceremonies to sink to a position of secondary importance when those grand spiritual conceptions which were the object of their institution became firmly fixed in the mind of the nation. Such we find to be the case in their subsequent history. Although the greater part of the people were probably unable to see the real spiritual import of these services, and never rose above the most formal observance of them, there was a more spiritual class.

¹ The various forms and ceremonies of the law also served another purpose aside from those mentioned; for they constituted distinct types of things to come in the future.

Among these were the later prophets, who entertained loftier ideas of God's will and placed much of the ritualistic part of Moses' law in an inferior position. Thus, at a later period we notice a deviation from a most rigid requirement of the law. Under the Mosaic regulations no man was permitted to partake of the passover while ceremonially unclean. In the time of Hezekiah, however, when the people assembled at Jerusalem to keep the Passover, and many among them were ceremonially unfit to observe the ordinance, this binding requirement of the law was disregarded and they were permitted to partake; for Hezekiah prayed for them, saying, "The good Lord pardon every one that *prepareth his heart to seek God*, the Lord God of his fathers, *though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary.*" 2 Chron. 30:18, 19. It is clear from this passage that greater stress had come to be laid upon the attitude of the heart than upon the formal requirements of the law. The same idea is also conveyed in the words of the prophet Samuel to King Saul: "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, *to obey is better than sacrifice*, and to harken than the fat of rams." 1 Sam. 15:22. Isaiah, in emphatic terms,

denounces the formal fastings of the Israelites, and then adds, "Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?" Isa. 58:6.

More than this, the prophets even proclaimed the entire discontinuance of some of these ceremonial observances and declared that the law system itself was temporary in its nature, designed to be succeeded by something of a better and more spiritual character. Through Isaiah the Lord said, "I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, of lambs, or of he-goats. . . . Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I can not away with; it is iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them." Isa. 1:11-14. Jeremiah says, "To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me." Jer. 6:20.

If it be objected that this attitude of the Almighty toward their formal services resulted

merely from their exceedingly sinful hearts and practises, we reply that this condition of affairs is what gives clearness and force to the thought under consideration—that all such ceremonial observances were inferior to those higher moral principles which they were designed to inculcate.

David says, "Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire; mine ears hast thou opened: burnt offering and sin-offering hast thou not required." Psa. 40:6. And the introduction of a superior order was clearly predicted by Jeremiah, in these words: "I will bring you to Zion; and I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. And it shall come to pass . . . in those days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more. At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of the Lord, and all the nations shall be gathered unto it." Jer. 3:14-17. If the ark of the covenant was to be no longer remembered nor visited, we have in this scripture the certain announcement of the entire discontinuance of the entire system of ceremonial observances of which it constituted the central and most prominent feature.

In another place the same prophet predicts in clearer language the establishment of a system superior to that of Moses' law: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah. . . . But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people." Chap. 31:31-33.

But the prophet Micah seems to rise to the highest conception of a spiritual worship in contrast with the Levitical service. In one of the most remarkable passages in the Bible he utters these words: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil. . . . He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but *to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.*" Mic. 6:6-8. In this scripture we have an abridgment or summary of all of God's revealed will unto mankind: it declares our relations with God, and with each other,

and therefore includes the entire scope of human duty.

Now, while the chief object of the institution of these ceremonial observances was, as we have shown, the inculcation of certain necessary ideas in the minds of the Israelites, there was a feature of the Mosaic law that was of a more permanent character and that we do not find relaxing under the later dispensation of the prophets. I refer to the moral part of the law. Though according to the Scriptures only one law was given to them, yet it did not constitute an indivisible whole, but its component parts may be classified as civil, ceremonial, and moral precepts. Scattered throughout the entire law, and in nine of the commandments of the Decalogue, we find precepts of this moral character.

Dismissing those commandments of a civil nature, because irrelevant to the present consideration, we desire to make a proper distinction between the moral and the ceremonial parts of Moses' law. Though not adverting to this subject, Bishop Butler nevertheless lays the proper basis for its consideration by drawing the following clear line of demarkation between moral precepts, and other precepts, which he denominates *positive*. This latter class would, of course, when ap-

plied to the law, include both the civil and the ceremonial commandments. He says, "Moral precepts are precepts the reasons of which we see; positive precepts are precepts the reasons of which we do not see." Therefore he goes on to show that "*moral duties arise out of the nature of the case itself, prior to external command. Positive duties do not arise out of the nature of the case, but from external command; nor would they be duties at all were it not for such command received from Him whose creatures and subjects we are.*"¹

With reference to its bearing on our present subject we might illustrate the definition thus: Through a proper understanding of his constitutional nature it is possible, and even natural, for a man, independently of all superhuman revelation, to comprehend that he ought to love and obey the God who has made him, and that he ought to do good to his fellow creatures instead of murdering them. This is *moral* law, and it is, to a great extent at least, revealed *subjectively* in the human consciousness. On the other hand, he could never by such means arrive at the conviction that he ought to keep the Passover or observe the Sabbath on the seventh day of the week—or any Sab-

1 Analogy of Revealed Religion, p. 208.

bath whatever for that matter. This is *ceremonial*, or "*positive*," law; for in order to become a law at all it must first be revealed *objectively* to him. This distinction is immutable. In the very nature of things God himself could not constitute Sabbath-keeping a moral precept without subverting a divine, universal law. And when the moral precepts of the Mosaic system were given, they were not originated, but merely copied from that higher, universal law. See Matt. 22: 36-40. In this sense moral precepts are made a part of objective revelation.

As we have noticed the object and the evanescent nature of the ceremonial features of the Levitical economy, we will now consider the character and the use of its moral precepts. Since they were principles existing in the nature of things, they neither arose with the enactment of the other precepts of that law nor were destined to pass away with the abrogation of that system. Why, then, were they made a part of it? We arrive at a correct solution of the matter thus: Since the external and ceremonial features were given in order to reveal, in some measure at least, the character of God and his consequent attitude toward wrong-doing, the moral precepts, which cover all of man's fundamental obligations, were

included in order clearly and authoritatively to *define sin*.

The fact that the Mosaic system constituted a standard in this respect is shown by the positive statement of the apostle, "*By the law is the knowledge of sin.*" Rom. 3:20. In another place he says, "I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet." Chap. 7:7. This statement does not signify that he could never have possessed any knowledge of sin independently of the law; for the context shows that he had reference to a particular time in his experience. "For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." Ver. 9. This specifies his infantile state, when he had no knowledge of God's law and was therefore innocent; but when he became enlightened (enlightenment came to him through the law), his actions acquired a new moral quality, and disobedience became thereby sinful.

This thought that the Mosaic system outlined the moral character of men's actions in an authoritative way, and thus defined sin, makes intelligible the statement of the same apostle that "the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, *that we might be justified by faith.*" Gal.

3:24. It prepared the people for the Christian doctrine of salvation from sin. Had the law existed merely for the one purpose of exhibiting symbols and types prefiguring salvation, it would have been but a visible prophecy of coming redemption, and would not have prepared the people in any important sense to receive the higher Christian system.

As it required the bondage in Egypt to fit the Jews to love and appreciate the Lord and Moses as their temporal deliverers; so, also, it required the knowledge and the feeling of man's wretched and sinful condition in order to cause him to desire and appreciate Christ as his spiritual deliverer. For this cause the law brought into great prominence the evil character of his deeds, while at the same time he was made more sensible of his miserable state by the fact that it was "not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." Heb. 10:4. He had the knowledge of his sins indelibly impressed upon his mind and conscience, but he possessed no Savior; and thus was he prepared for the message of Christ.

How forcibly is this illustrated in the case of Paul! In the same chapter where he speaks of how the law made known unto him the knowl-

edge of sin (Romans 7), he goes on to record the dreadful struggle that took place in his experience between the knowledge and better judgment of his mind, and the sin-principle as operating in his heart and life. With sin victorious in the conflict, the depths of his miserable condition are disclosed in this striking phrase: "*O wretched man that I am!* who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" In such an unhappy state under the law he was prepared for the help of a Savior; and, catching a glimpse of Jesus, he answers the question himself in the words, "I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord." "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death." Chap. 8:1, 2.

Before closing the present discussion we wish to notice the preparation for Christ and his system that existed outside of Judaism and the law. In view of the fact that in the following chapter our subject enlarges, extending beyond the limits of the Israelitish nation, in order to embrace a universal Christianity, it is fitting that the general preparations which preceded its establishment should first be considered.

Clement of Alexandria says: "By reflection . . . those among the Greeks who have philosophized accurately, see God."¹ We have before shown that aside from the direct intuition which characterizes mankind generally, some of the philosophers systematically arrived at the conception of one universal God, supreme Creator, although they were unable to define his relations with men. The apostle Paul appears to have admitted as much; for in his sermon to the Athenians, delivered on Mars Hill, he acknowledged that they were ignorantly worshipping the "unknown God" whom he desired to reveal to them more perfectly through the positive knowledge made known to the world by Jesus Christ. "Accordingly," says Clement again, "before the advent of the Lord, philosophy was necessary to the Greeks . . . being a kind of preparatory training to those who attain to faith through demonstration. . . . For this was a schoolmaster to bring the Hellenic mind, as the law, the Hebrews, to Christ. Philosophy, therefore, was a preparation, paving the way for him who is perfected in Christ."²

In another place the same author says: "Philosophy, being the search for truth, contributes

¹ *Stromata*, Book I, Chap. 19.

² *Ibid.*, Book I, Chap. 5.

to the comprehension of truth. . . . But its discovery is by the Son."¹ We have before shown that the moral teachings of the philosophers resulted in the more perfect disclosure of man's shameful depravity, from which their systems could not deliver, and that for this cause some of them were led to believe that a benevolent God would not always leave mankind in this condition, but would send a teacher from heaven to restore truth and happiness to the race. They saw the need of a Savior.

But the subject can be extended still further; for there exists in all men some knowledge of right and wrong independent of revelation and elaborate systems of philosophy, and they are convinced of the need of divine help through their inability to conform even to the standard of right which they comprehend. This position—that light (sufficient in some respects at least to define sin) existed among the heathen independent of God's revelation—is sustained by the words of the apostle Paul. "For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing

1 *Stromata*, Book I, Chap. 20.

witness, and their thoughts the meanwhile accusing or else excusing one another." Rom. 2: 14, 15. Now, this scripture can not be limited in its interpretation to the thought that the Gentiles possessed some sort of nature of right which unconsciously determined their conduct; for such would not involve the conscience, since, as we have before shown, conscience enforces only what intellect believes to be truth: but it teaches that they naturally possessed sufficient knowledge of right to obligate their conscience and thus condemn them for wrong-doing. The apostle's argument was not that they were saved through their conscience, but that they were all condemned and lost, and therefore stood in need of a Savior. After showing the sinful condition of the Jews, notwithstanding their law system, he declares, "We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, *that they are all under sin.*" Rom. 3: 9. "That every mouth may be stopped, and *all the world may become guilty before God.*" Ver. 19. "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." Ver. 23. Thus, the whole wide world, reeling under the baneful influence of sin, waited the coming of a universal Savior to bring spiritual deliverance and happiness to mankind.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MORAL SYSTEM OF CHRIST.

While the entire world was still embraced in the dreariness of that long sinful night whose darkness was undiminished, except by a few rays of inspiration which shone on the Jewish nation, the dawn of a new and glorious day was heralded by the bright-shining star of Bethlehem which guided the Magi of the East to the cradle of our newly born Savior. The expectation of the prophets, the hope of Israel, and the destiny of the entire human race was mysteriously centered in this long-looked-for event. The angelic, soul-inspiring announcement to the shepherds on the plain proclaims the splendid object of his earthly advent: "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a SAVIOR, which is Christ the Lord." Enrapturous thought! A Savior who will awaken joy in the hearts of *all people!* But it is true. The grand music in that celestial harmony which burst from the Judean skies on this his glorious natal day—"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men"—was a blessed portent of his kindly mission.

“O little town of Bethlehem,
How still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
The silent stars go by,
Yet in thy dark streets shineth
The everlasting Light;
The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in thee tonight.

“For Christ is born of Mary,
And gathered all above,
While mortals sleep, the angels keep
Their watch of wondering love.
O morning stars, together
Proclaim the holy birth!
And praises sing to God the King,
And peace to men on earth.”

—*Phillips Brooks.*

Christ spent the early days of his earthly sojourn in comparative obscurity. But when John was baptizing in the wilderness, he said to his questioners, with reference to Christ, “There standeth one among you, whom ye know not”; and the next day John pointed him out as “the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” The time had now come for the Messiah to enter upon his personal ministry. We must bear in mind, however, the fact we have before shown—that miracles are an absolute necessity in order to prove the superhuman origin of a religion. Therefore, in accordance with this requirement of human nature, the first public appearance of the

Savior was attended by a supernatural event which proclaimed his position and authority; for, coming from his baptism in the Jordan, he received the divine attestation by a voice from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." But this heavenly approval was only the initial one of a series of extraordinary events that plainly stamped the divine character on his work and mission.

The first noticeable thing that took place in his ministry was a marvelous display of supernatural power. "And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people. *And his fame went throughout all Syria:* and they brought unto him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy, and he healed them. And there followed him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and from Decapolis, and from Jerusalem, and from Judea, and from beyond Jordan." Matt. 4: 23-25.

Now, whatever manifestations of Christ's power may be properly attributed to his love and compassion for afflicted and suffering humanity, it is

evident that a most important object of its exhibition was to prove his own mission and to establish the religion which he taught. This is shown also by certain definite scriptures bearing on the point. Thus, Peter, in his Pentecostal sermon, says to the Jews, "Jesus of Nazareth, a man *approved* of God among you, *by miracles and wonders and signs*, which God did by him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know." Acts 2:22. Again, in another place the same apostle says, "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil: for God was with him." Chap. 10:38.

This work of Christ was the proof of his divine authority. He himself demanded recognition on the ground of his miracle-working; for he said, "Believe me for the very works' sake." John 14:11. That this was his means of convincing men of his authority is further shown by the words of Nicodemus, who said to him, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: *for no man can do those miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.*" John 3:2. A key-note of the authoritative teaching of the apostles was the mighty power of God which was manifested in Christ Jesus.

In the Scriptural narrative we have the record of one miracle that was wrought for the express purpose of proving the divine mission of Christ. In Matt. 9:2-7 we read of the man who was brought to Jesus sick of the palsy. The Savior said to him, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee." When the Scribes regarded this statement as blasphemous, Christ said to them, "Whether is easier to say, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?" It was beyond the power of man either to heal the body or to forgive the sins of this man, although, in the human estimation it would be the easier to say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," since no one could tell whether they were forgiven or not. Now, it was the special mission of Christ to save the soul; and to prove it he said, "*But that ye may know* that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins (then saith he to the sick of the palsy), Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house. And he arose, and departed to his house."

Nothing can be more certain than that this display of supernatural power was necessary to the establishment of the new religion which was destined to supersede in importance all other religions and for which the religion of the Old Testament age had been but a preparatory course. Had Christ

appeared merely as an ordinary teacher, his precepts, however grand in moral character, could never have carried the weight of conviction and of supreme authority to the minds of the people without the appearance of something bearing the impress of divinity. In the very nature of things, men could not cast aside their former religious convictions and accept and believe a new doctrine which was at variance with every other religion, unless they could be made to feel that it was instituted by divine command. If any event occurs that can be easily accounted for on the plane of human working, such can not be accepted as the direct action of God; but when manifestations of a superhuman character appear, they are readily attributed to the Almighty. Such is human nature; and we can no more alter that law of our being than we can change places with the amphibians and mollusks.

The special revelations of God's will in all ages have been accommodated to this constitutional requirement of man, for they have been attended by miracles. In preceding chapters we have noticed the supernatural occurrences at the time of the exodus and of the giving of the law. We find the same principle working in subsequent times; for the prophets that were sent as special mediators

bearing important messages to Israel were usually (perhaps always) miracle-workers. And during the time of Elijah, when Israel seemed about to go down under idolatry, miracles abounded for the purpose of proving his authoritative mission as the prophet of Jehovah; and through this divine attestation the people were convinced and the future history of the nation altered.

In order to make his revelations more effective God has usually supplied his special messengers with another witness to their mission—the witness of prophecy. When Moses appeared in Egypt for the purpose of delivering the Israelites, it was in fulfilment of the prediction made by Abraham long before, that they should be led forth from Egyptian servitude to Canaan. This prophecy of the past prepared the way for the claims of Moses, and thus the manifestation of God's power through him was all that was necessary to inspire hope and confidence in his leadership. The mission and the character of the prophets are also proved by the fulfilment of their predictions, as well as by their miracles. And though at this late date their miracles may be incapable of rational proof, and therefore lack that convincing element which accompanied their manifestation, it is certain that their predictions, in most cases at least, admit of

verification; and hence their miracles are possible of belief.

Now, the mission of Christ possessed the authority of prophecy. But it is clear that this evidence alone, independent of miraculous manifestations, would not suffice to establish his position as the Messiah; for a dozen individuals might have appeared, making the same claims, and the world would soon have rejected them all, so far as their pretensions to superiority were concerned, unless one had been able to come forward and show that he was "approved of God by miracles and wonders and signs." It appears from the words of Gamaliel, in Acts 5: 36, 37, that something similar to this occurred in those days. Of the two methods of proof, however, the prophetic evidences are the most effectual, because they admit of universal verification, whereas miracles are convincing only to the beholders, being incapable of proof to all others, except through belief founded on testimony.

The writings of the apostle Peter show that the Christian doctrine which he preached was based on both of these kinds of evidence, and he also gives their relative value. He says: "We have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of

our Lord Jesus Christ, but were *eye-witnesses of his majesty*. For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. *And this voice which came from heaven we heard*, when we were with him in the holy mount." 2 Pet. 1:16-18. This is the first line of proof, under which may be classed all miraculous manifestations; for they appeal to the senses and are of a local or private character, convincing only to those who witness them. The second and most important line of evidence is set forth in the words following: "We have also *a more sure word of prophecy*; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place. . . . Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Vers. 19-21. The latter class of proofs are not confined to a limited number, but through the written Scriptures they have become the common property of all men. While in addition to those Scriptures of the ancient prophets the apostles had the corroborating testimony of Christ's miracles to the establishment of his Mes-

siahship, a witness we do not have at the present time except by belief, we in turn have an evidence which they did not have in the beginning of their ministry; that is, the fulfilment of Christ's predictions, which admit of general verification.

A remarkable similarity exists between the giving of the Mosaic revelation and Christ's procedure in establishing the gospel, a fact that will become apparent as we continue this chapter. We have seen that miracles were the means by which the leadership of Moses was established. Likewise, the mission of Christ was attested by "miracles and wonders and signs." Again, we have noticed that the next thing in order in the Mosaic record was the manifestation of God's goodness and kindness to the Israelites in offering them the privilege of liberation from bondage and actually conducting them toward the promised land. So, also, Christ, after manifesting his glorious power and drawing the people around him, entered into the synagogue and taught a doctrine of love which astonished the hearers. "And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal

the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord. . . . And he began to say unto them, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears. And all bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of his mouth. . . . And they were astonished at his doctrine: for his word was with power." Luke 4:17-22, 32. If this is not sufficient to show the loving character of his mission, go with the Savior to the Mount of Beatitudes, and there listen to those marvelous words which fell from the lips of him who "spake as never man spake":

"Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

"Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek: for they shall inherit the earth.

"Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

"Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

“Blessed are the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God.

“Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness’ sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Matt. 5:3-10.

Are not such wonderful precepts sufficient to turn the hearts of the people to deep and everlasting appreciation of Christ? *No; they are not.* Truth of an entirely different character is essential to the formation even of the foundation upon which these promises and blessings rest.

As the Israelites could not have experienced the deep feeling of gratitude for and appreciation of God as their temporal deliverer through Moses had they not first groaned under the most rigorous servitude in Egypt; so, also, mankind could not have properly appreciated Christ as their Savior without first experiencing that deep inward conviction and sense of their need of such a spiritual deliverer. How could such a realization be effected? The law system, by giving some actual knowledge of sin in an authoritative sense, prepared the way and partially accomplished this result; but it was deficient in certain respects, as we shall proceed to show.

Although the Mosaic economy was given by in-

spiration, it was only a temporal code relating to men in this world, and the administration of its laws was placed in human hands. Under its jurisdiction, no matter how guilty of unholy desires a man might be, he could not be legally convicted of crime until he had actually committed a deed prohibited by the law. Even then he might escape its penalty; for, although guilty of murder, he could not be condemned and sentenced except on the positive testimony of at least two witnesses. And the greatest punishment that the law effected or threatened was literal "death without mercy." Now, without a broader conviction of man's accountability to law, one would not be apt to receive that pungent conviction of sin necessary to form the basis of redemption. Therefore Christ proceeds, in this Sermon on the Mount, to lay down a perfect law defining sin, not a law dealing with the external acts as passed upon by fallible man, but one relating to the soul with its hidden desires and intentions as known to the Almighty. Furthermore, the penalty attached to this spiritual law of Christ is no common punishment like stripes and imprisonment, or even literal death, but it consists of "hell fire." Let us quote a few texts in this chapter and notice the enforcement of this higher law.

Verses 21, 22. "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill. . . . But I say unto you, That *whosoever is angry* with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, *Raca*, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, *shall be in danger of hell fire.*"

Verses 27-29. "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her *hath committed adultery with her already* in his heart. And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be *cast into hell.*"

Verses 38, 39. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, that ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also."

Verses 43-45. "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy: but I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully

use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven."

In his discourses and parables throughout his ministry, Christ continually set forth this doctrine of man's accountability to God in a future state, and warned them to "flee from the wrath which is to come." Over and over again we read such expressions as "hell," "hell fire," "everlasting fire," "torment," "everlasting punishment," "brought down to hell," "furnace of fire," "wailing and gnashing of teeth," "outer darkness," "place of torment," "in hell . . . being in torments," "the damnation of hell." By such a fearful delineation of the terrible penalty awaiting the incorrigible transgressor in the next world, Christ impressed upon his hearers the heinous character of sin and the opposition of God's nature to all wrong-doing. Well did the apostle say, "He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of *how much sorer punishment*, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God? . . . It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God." Heb. 10:28-31.

With sin thus defined—standing naked and exposed in all of its hideous character—a proper basis was laid for the appreciation of that Savior

who came to deliver mankind from "the wrath which is to come," and brought "eternal salvation to all them that obey him."

But although he denounced evil, and threatened wicked men with the most direful consequences, his mission reached beyond such a negative standard, and he proclaimed the positive Word of life to the famishing multitudes, yea, "brought life and immortality to life through the gospel." Everywhere he went, the "Sun of righteousness" illuminated the darkness of saddened hearts and brought happiness into lives. In loving words of invitation that have come ringing down through the ages, he called the care-worn to the blessed realization of heavenly relief: "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

With his mission attested by divine manifestations, and his discourses enunciating the most glorious precepts ever uttered on the earth, his word possessed an authority that could not be resisted. Even his enemies were made to exclaim, "Never man spake like this man." What wisdom was manifested in his teaching! He wasted no time

on extraneous or unimportant subjects, as did Buddha, who limited the length and height of a man's bed, but he went straight to the marrow of all moral questions and said the final word which has stood unshaken for centuries.

His life was an exhibition of compassion for suffering humanity. Everywhere he healed the sick, lifted the fallen, and spoke words of comfort and of consolation to those who were distressed. In character he was pure, holy, faultless—without sin. While he has been the object of contempt and of ridicule by enemies, while his teaching has been despised and trampled under foot, our Lord has never been charged with wickedness. What a model of virtue for all succeeding ages! Preaching a doctrine which seemed to breathe the very atmosphere of heaven, and leading such an exemplary life, he called mankind to the plane of highest moral excellence. Nor was this all. The strongest inducement, promise of eternal life, in contrast with the doctrine of everlasting torment, was brought to bear upon sinful man to draw his affections heavenward. Everywhere he held before men the final reward of "everlasting life," "heaven," "life eternal," and the "kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world."

“Religion, if in heavenly truths attired,
Needs only to be seen to be admired.”

—*Cowper.*

There is no religion like the religion of Jesus Christ. It stands in a class by itself. It is the product of inspiration, the work of its divine, illustrious Founder. Theodore Parker exclaims, “But eighteen centuries have passed since the sun of humanity rose so high in Jesus; what man, what sect, has mastered his thought, comprehended his method, and so fully applied it to life.” And Renan, the rationalist, could not refrain from paying this beautiful tribute to the person of Christ: “Repose now in thy glory, noble Founder! Thy work is finished, thy divinity is established. . . . Whatever may be the surprises of the future, Jesus will never be surpassed.” Even Rousseau, who was no biased witness for Christianity, was charmed with the life and the character of our only Savior, and he exclaimed: “Is it possible that the sacred personage, whose history the Bible contains, should be himself a mere man? What sweetness, what purity in his manner! What an affecting gracefulness in his instructions! What sublimity in his maxims! What profound wisdom in his discourses! If the life and the death of Socrates are those of a sage, the life and death of Jesus are those of a God.”

CHAPTER X.

THE GOSPEL SECRET OF REGENERATION.

The great design of the religion of Jesus Christ is to produce love in the hearts of men. In order to accomplish this result, his religion must be more than a mere system of moral instructions; for such, as we have shown, can not change the natural sinful disposition of the heart. The noblest precepts of the ancient philosophers never endowed mankind with a supreme love for God and the right, nor could they alter the affections sufficiently to produce love for an enemy. Neither were the results different when the moralists themselves led consistent lives. Of all the various ethical systems that the world has seen, not including Christianity, Buddhism doubtless takes the first rank, and its founder is said to have been a man of excellent moral character. But so far from accomplishing the regeneration of the world, the system has been barren of results even in morally elevating those who have come in contact with it, as the history of the hundreds of millions of its adherents abundantly shows. The doctrine possesses the external shell of a virtuous character, but lacks that internal life-energy from God which produces living and lasting results.

Now, the Christian religion could not have supplied the crying need of humanity and have secured a firm abiding-place in the hearts of men, had it not possessed something of a more positive nature. In noblest poetry and in loftiest phrase we might have expressed our admiration of the character of Christ and extolled the charming beauty, the exquisite simplicity, and the striking wisdom of his instructions; and yet such a model of spotless perfection, such a standard of human excellence, would have been powerless to effect the regeneration of men without the aid of a secret power which lays hold upon the soul and transforms its moral disposition. What is there about the gospel of Christ that produces this change of affections from hatred to love, and from sin to holiness?

It is a well-known and important fact, a fact which numerous writers have observed, that the affections of men naturally act in a reciprocal manner when there is a positive manifestation of affection on the part of the object loved. Thus, when an individual unselfishly and at great personal sacrifice exercises himself for the benefit of another, there arises spontaneously in the heart of the recipient a feeling of gratitude and love for the beneficiary that did not exist before. Enlarg-

ing on this thought and giving it full force of application to the subject of Christianity, we shall find that the secret of that intense love for God which the gospel imparts to man is due to *the manifestation of God's love for us in the person of his Son Jesus Christ*. And this introduces the doctrine of the atonement.

Under the law dispensation man was made to feel that the bloody sacrifices which he offered were only substitutes for his own life and that without the shedding of blood there was no remission. God said to those under the law, "The life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul." Lev. 17:11. This familiar subject of animal substitution foreshadowed and prepared the way for the Christian doctrine of atonement.

But why was an atonement necessary? Could not the Almighty forgive erring men through the exercise of His loving disposition alone, without the payment of some satisfaction for sin? No; such could not be accomplished consistently with his other attributes and the moral government that he has ordained. The effectiveness of a law can be maintained only by the infliction of its penal-

ties. Should the chief executive of a state or a nation possess and exercise the power of clemency to the extent of immediately pardoning all law-breakers, who would be able to picture the disastrous results? The law a nullity, a premium on wrong-doing, the righteous despised, while sin and evil men hold high carnival together! Human laws, however, relate to the conduct of men only here in time, and therefore faithful obedience to such laws can not secure more than temporal benefits, nor can the penalty of their violation be more than temporal.

Now, the Creator placed his creatures under a moral law that exacted perfect obedience. This law had a penalty attached, which was determined in accordance with the nature of the offense in the mind of its Author. But God, being infinitely holy, must of necessity be infinitely opposed to unholiness; and therefore the law, which reflects his moral disposition, must be infinitely just and in the same degree opposed to injustice. The reward for obedience would therefore, in accordance with the nature of the law, be infinite; while the penalty for its violation could not in the nature of things be other than infinite punishment. It is an illogical supposition that the nature, requirements, and rewards of a law system can be of one char-

acter, and its penalty for disobedience bear no qualitative relation to it, but be regulated by another standard. Infinite punishment must be the penalty for the violation of God's universal law, if the moral government of heaven which requires perfect obedience be infinite and eternal.

When man disobeyed this law of God, he laid himself liable to its penalty. His position did not determine the nature of the offense; for, whether the violator was human or angelic, the violation of God's infinite law would be of the same nature, an infinite offense, and would accordingly deserve its penalty. "Is not thy wickedness great? and thine iniquities *infinite*?" Job 22:5. In all human affairs it is not the social standing of the criminal, but the worthiness of the violated law and the dignity of its offended author, that determines the character of the act and justifies the execution of the penalty. Thus, a wilful murder when committed by the lowest serf is in reality the same evil deed in character as when perpetrated by a nobleman, and is worthy of the same punishment.

That God thus reckons all wilful offenses against his infinite law as equal, regardless of who the violators are, and amenable to the same penalty, is shown by the Scriptures. The apostle Peter speaks

of "the angels that sinned"—and to show that they were not of the human race, he places them in contrast with mortal beings by saying that they are "greater in might and power" than men are—and says they were "cast down to hell, and . . . reserved unto judgment." And Jude refers to them as having left "their first estate" and declares that they, together with Sodom and Gomorrah and other evil-doers, are "set forth for an *example*, suffering the vengeance of *eternal fire*." We are not here concerned with who these angels were, the nature of the event, nor when it took place, but merely refer to it for the same purpose that the apostles did—to show that angels and men receive the same punishment (infinite punishment) for violating God's law, thus making future punishment a more effective "ensample unto those that after should live ungodly."

The enforcement of the divine law is the work of God's *justice*, and infinite justice would therefore demand the eternal punishment of every violator. It is manifest that the Almighty could not palliate or excuse sin without destroying the respect of all his intelligent creatures for that law which he ordained; neither could he do so without ignoring an essential attribute of his own character—justice—and thus involving himself in an

absurdity. This inconsistency we could not expect in the moral Governor of the universe. But at the same time this rigid enforcement of the penalty by justice, if permitted, would be at the expense of another attribute of the Almighty—love—and such inharmony we could not conceive to exist in the Godhead.

We can easily perceive how the love of God might be directed toward erring man when we reason by analogy from the human affections. Although the father is grieved because of the deeds of his wayfaring sons, and feels no sympathy with the character of their acts, he experiences a paternal affection for them because they are his children. Now, while we can not “find out the Almighty unto perfection,” still we are able to draw some conclusions from the necessary character of his attributes so far as they are manifested to the human understanding, bearing in mind this established fact: that whatever can be logically reduced to absurdity can not be true. We might conclude that the love and fatherly benevolence of the Creator would cause him to save the entire human race unconditionally, as some have even argued; but we have already shown that such a conclusion is illogical and therefore untrue, because it would ignore God’s infinite attribute of justice, which

demands the execution of the divine law, and thus would involve the Almighty in an absurdity. On the other hand, we might say that the infinite justice of God would cause the damnation of the whole human family; but this also is illogical, because it would set at naught the action of God's attribute of love.

While it is not our purpose to "limit the holy One of Israel" nor his attributes, still it is evident that both of these principles can not act in a full and unrestrained sense at the same time: there must exist a basis of unity and harmony of working that brings into consistent exercise all of the infinite faculties. And herein lies the great mystery of atonement and of redemption. The infinite dignity and majesty of the divine law must be maintained, and therefore satisfaction for sin must be paid to the justice of God; but the divine principle of love for his own children must also have a sphere of operation, and therefore favor must be shown to a guilty race.

Man rested under the sentence of eternal death, for he was in debt to the justice of God, and the only way whereby he could discharge that obligation which he had incurred through his transgression was by suffering the extreme penalty. The man who in olden times was imprisoned for debt

with the understanding that he could not come out until he had "paid the uttermost farthing" lost all hope of release through his own efforts when the strong bars of his cell closed upon him. In debt, and in prison, with nothing to pay. Such was the helpless, unhappy state of sinful man! He could not redeem himself. Angels could not; for they also are under the law that exacts perfect obedience, and therefore they have no surplus obedience or righteousness to atone for the transgressions of man. Only a creature over whom the law had no jurisdiction was able for such a task. Jesus Christ—all-glorious name!—stepped forward and said, "I will bear the penalty of that broken law; let the stroke of infinite justice fall on me," and he went to CALVARY, exhibiting at once the justice and the love of God.

"Look at him dying, bleeding for thee;
Though thou hast slighted him often,
Still, sinner, he's pleading for thee."

An historical incident, as cited by Johnston,¹ will illustrate beautifully this necessity of atonement. Zaleucus, the Locrian king, gave to the Greeks their first code of written laws in the seventh century B. C. One of these laws, it is said, prohibited adultery, the penalty for its vio-

¹ Scientific Faith, p. 180.

lation being the loss by the offender of both eyes. That law was violated by the king's son. Now, while the king had it within his power to extend clemency to his son and pardon him, he could not have done so without lowering the dignity of the law and manifesting a favoritism inconsistent with his official position. On the other hand, had he condemned his son to the full penalty of the law, he would have done so at the expense of his father-love and inconsistently with his character as a man. How, then, could he both manifest the love of his heart and maintain the justice of his law? He directed that the son should suffer the loss of one eye, and then ordered one of his own eyes destroyed. By this means he not only upheld the majesty of his law, but also showed love to his offending son.

Though this case is not just parallel with the atonement of Christ, yet the comparison brings out the necessity of the Redeemer's sacrifice and gives the doctrine added force. The infinite excellence and majesty of the divine law could not be maintained without the enforcement of its penalty, nor could the Father's supreme love be manifested without showing mercy to mankind; hence the necessity of an atoning sacrifice. "For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten

Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, CHRIST DIED FOR US." Rom. 5:8. And Christ, being infinite, was able in his death to satisfy the demands of justice upon an indefinite number of finite creatures, without enduring eternal suffering; for infinity answers to infinity.

This thought of a divine atonement commits us to the doctrine of Christ as the world's exclusive Savior. The love of God for sinful man is manifested directly to the world through the person of his Son, and in this manner only. The apostle Paul informs us that "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself" (2 Cor. 5:19); and, again, he declares positively that "the love of God" "*is in Christ Jesus* our Lord." Rom. 8:39. Independent of that plan of redemption revealed by the Savior, men fall under the justice of the Almighty; for God, outside of Christ, "is a consuming fire." This his word plainly declares: "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." John 3:36.

That the atonement of Christ was the means by

which the salvation of the world was to be effected is clearly shown by the teaching of Jesus himself. He says, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." John 3:14, 15. In another place he says, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, *will draw all men unto me*"; and in the following verse the writer adds, "This he said, signifying what death he should die." John 12:32, 33. In Num. 21:6-9 we have the account of the Israelites' experience with serpents. At the command of the Lord, Moses made a fiery serpent of brass and set it up on a pole, and by looking upon it those who had been bitten by the poisonous' reptiles found relief. Christ places this circumstance in a typical relation with his own death—"that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." As the only hope of the suffering Israelites was in that serpent of brass, which resembled the cause of all their present misery; so, also, the only hope of a lost world lay in that "man of sorrows" who, being made "in the likeness of sinful flesh," resembled the instrument by which all the evil and wickedness in this part of God's universe had been committed. Although being divine and suffering to sat-

isfy the claims of justice, he died as man *and for man*, "the just for the unjust, *that he might bring us to God.*" 1 Pet. 4: 18.

In this mystery of the atonement we have "the hidden wisdom, which God ordained before the world unto our glory: which none of the princes of this world knew: for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." 1 Cor. 2: 7, 8. On this marvelous event, the most stupendous in the history of the human race, the whole structure of Christianity rests, and herein lies the secret of the wonderful power of the gospel which transforms the hearts of men. While the Jews sought for signs, and the Greeks were proud in their wisdom, we find both signs and wisdom in the Christian system, and exclaim with the apostle, "*We preach Christ crucified*, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and unto the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks Christ the *power* of God, and the *wisdom* of God." "For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God." 1 Cor. 1: 23, 24, 18.

In this doctrine of the cross lies the most characteristic feature of Christianity. It gives it a rank infinitely superior to all other forms of re-

ligion. Do other systems define sin? So does Christianity; and in the teaching of our Savior exceeds them all. Do they prescribe a standard of human duty? So does Christianity; and it holds before mankind the strongest incentives to right-doing. Do they exhibit a model of excellence as an object of worship? So does Christianity; and in the person of Jesus we have the purest and noblest example of faultless and spotless virtue that has ever trod the earth—his enemies being the judges. But we have seen that no other religion is capable of changing the moral disposition of men from sin to holiness; whereas this transformation is effected in Christianity through the “cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom,” says the apostle, “*the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.*” Gal. 6: 14. It is this manifestation of divine love that draws out the soul’s affections to God.

Who that comprehends the infinite character of sin and its direful consequences, and reflects upon his own wretchedness and helplessness, can behold this noble example of the self-denying Jesus and not experience a feeling of appreciation springing up in the soul? When we see him in the garden weeping under the load of our sins, that we might go free; when we behold him enduring the cruel

stripes, that we might be caressed with his love; when we look on his lovely brow bearing the crown of thorns before Pilate, that we might wear a diadem of praise; when we view him staggering under the cross to Calvary, that we might be borne on angels' wings to glory; and when we gaze at the awful tragedy of Golgotha—the suspended body, the agonized look, the flowing blood—the Son of God dying, that we might live forevermore—O God! can we contemplate such scenes without exclaiming, “WE LOVE HIM BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US”?
1 John 4: 19.

“When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

“Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ, my God;
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to his blood.

“See, from his head, his hands, his feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down;
Did e’er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

“Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.”

—Isaac Watts.

So completely has this manifestation of divine mercy captivated the affections, and transformed the hearts of men from the love of sin to the love of the dying yet ever-living Savior, that from that moment until the present time millions have been bound by its holy charm. Nor have the powers infernal that have been turned loose on the humble followers of the Nazarene been able to sever this sacred connection. Though stretched on the rack, stoned, beheaded, devoured by beasts, hanged, drowned, buried alive, and burned at the stake, yet to their last dying breath they have clung to Jesus with supreme affection, rejoicing because counted worthy to suffer shame for his sake. Miracle of the ages—God dying for man! Substitution! At once Sacrifice, Mediator, and Reconciler!

“In the cross of Christ I glory,
Tow’ring o’er the wrecks of time;
All the light of sacred story
Gathers round its head sublime.”

—*John Bowring.*

CHAPTER XI.

PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY.

One of the most distinguishing characteristics of Christianity is its adaptability to the universal needs of mankind. Although the seed of this divinely revealed religion was planted and nourished in Jewish soil, it was designed to spring up into a tree of immortal life whose luxuriant leaves should be for the healing of all the nations. The atonement of our Savior, upon which the gospel system is founded, can not be limited to one tribe or nation only. "Is he the God of the Jews only? Is he not also of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also." Rom. 3:29. "But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should *taste death for every man.*" Heb. 2:9.

In order to understand the object and the general application of Christianity to the work it is intended to accomplish in the world, it is essential that we comprehend its fundamental principles; that we discern, so to speak, its innate character. What is the nature of Christianity? Of what does it consist? What does it take to constitute a Chris-

tian? These questions have received various answers. Some appear to regard Christianity as a set of theological doctrines handed down through the centuries, the belief of which constitutes a man a Christian. Others think that joining a church, receiving baptism, or something like that gives a clear title to that designation. Benjamin Tefft has compiled the following definitions of Christianity:

Kant's: "Reverence for the moral law as a divine command."

Schelling's: "Union of the finite with the infinite."

Fitch's: "Faith in a moral government of the world."

Hegel's: "Mortality becoming conscious of the free universality of its concrete essence."

Hase's: "Striving after the absolute, which is in itself *unattainable*."

Wallaston's: "An obligation to *do* what ought not to be omitted, and to *forbear* what ought not to be done."

A New England transcendentalist's: "The seeds of truth, if not the living forms of truth, contained in the soul itself, ready to expand into bloom and beauty as it feels the light and heat of the upper world."

W. H. Channing's: "One of many religions all essentially divine."

Herbert Spencer's: "Something which passes the sphere of experience."

Robert Ingersoll's: "Arrant nonsense."

Martin Luther's: "The love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost."

Paul's: "The power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth."

Christ's: "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. . . . The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth: *so is every one that is born of the Spirit.*"

We unhesitatingly accept the designation given by the Author of Christianity as authoritative. Christ represented himself as the world's only Savior and exclusive hope. And when he began his ministry, he preached: "Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matt. 4:17); and, "Except a man *be born again*, he can not see the kingdom of God." John 3:3. Now, if the new-birth operation is the all-essential requirement of discipleship, then the Spirit-birth *state* is the condition constituting a man a Christian. The term *Christian* signifies an *imitator of Christ*; thus,

Christianity really implies a condition of *Christ-likeness*—which was purity of heart and conformity to God's will in act. Therefore Christianity is spiritual in its nature; the work of that Spirit-power which operates in the hearts of men, transforming them into this moral state of Godlikeness.

A careful distinction should be made between this fundamental nature of the Christian religion and the body of doctrines, customs, and practises, that may be associated with it. Schleiermacher held "that religion is not a *system of dogmas*, but an *inward experience*; not a speculation, but a feeling."¹ This heart-experience is the great essential; for without it, according to the teaching of Scripture, no one can see the kingdom of God. It is the all-important foundation on which the entire doctrinal system of the New Testament, pertaining to Christian duty, is based. With this internal work of grace, a man is a Christian though he be ignorant of nine-tenths of the commandments of God regarding human obligations; whereas, without this experience, he is not a true Christian though he understand and believe every precept revealed in the Holy Bible. Although a system of Christian doctrine is essential for the well-being of the church of Christ as a whole here

1 Transcendentalism in New England, pp. 49, 50.

on earth, yet in the individual application it should be borne in mind that an adherent of Christianity is not to be judged rashly because of his non-conformity to a certain standard of doctrine, but judged by the internal relationship which he holds to God. Doctrines must first be presented to the mind and comprehended by it before they can obligate the conscience and have any definite bearing on the soul's relationship with the Almighty. Yet how prone men have been to measure Christians by their theology, rather than by their religion.

It is evident that the man who accepts Christianity still possesses the essential traits and limitations of humanity, though he be truly converted to God. Therefore his efforts to give explanation to the Christian system and its workings will be but an expression of his own light and understanding on the subject. Even though he possess the Holy Ghost, as did the apostles, the result, in the nature of things, will not be different, except that under such a guiding influence he will ultimately and unfailingly be led into all the truth. But as the revelation of doctrinal truth must of necessity be a gradual process, he finds his comprehension of divine things constantly expanding, his theology broadening, and his con-

science undergoing a series of continuous modifications in accordance with the increase of light; and thus his entire individual experience is made up of this type of religious progression.

A cursory reading of these assertions may give the impression that they deprive Christianity of its standard of unity among Christians; but deeper and reflective thought will discover that in these very facts lies one of the great secrets of the universal adaptation of the gospel system, and thus makes it a practical one. For how could that inner experience of spiritual regeneration be the common property of all people, in every stage of enlightenment, if the gospel itself did not carry with it a spirit of adaptation that accommodates itself to the various degrees of light and knowledge possessed by the true believers in Jesus?

The poor ignorant man, though he be unable to explain the mystery of the atonement in any sense, and though he could not, to save his life, name all the books in the New Testament nor unravel the seventh chapter of Daniel, can, nevertheless, if he knows that he is a sinner and that Jesus died to save him, experience all the raptures of the new-birth state and *become a Christian*. On the other hand, the most advanced Christian, though a profound Bible scholar, though a Paul in the deep

things of the law and the gospel, though an Apollos or a Whitefield in fervent eloquence, is, notwithstanding, a Christian only by virtue of his heart-relationship to God. His intellectual attainments bear no qualitative relation to his soul's experience. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us." Tit. 3:4. "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast." Eph. 2:8, 9.

Now, if these two individuals recognize the essential fundamental nature of Christianity as consisting of the spiritual heart-experience, and do not confound it with their degrees of enlightenment, they can walk together in the unity of the Spirit. The one more advanced can say to his brother of lesser attainments: "Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing. And if in anything ye be otherwise minded, *God shall reveal even this unto you.*" Phil. 3:16, 15. And they read in the Bible of its being the will of God "that their hearts might be comforted, *being knit together in love.*" Col. 2:2. But if they should overlook or disregard this primary element of true religion and form some external basis of fellow-

ship, it is evident that strife and carnal division would result.

Let us carry this discussion a degree further and consider the subject of ideal and of practical religious standards. An ideal standard comprehends the thought of absolute perfection. It is unnecessary even to state that the Christian system of religion as revealed in the New Testament does not enjoin ideal perfection on the followers of Christ in their present state. True, it teaches the doctrine of *Christian perfection*, but this is an entirely different subject from the ideal perfection now under consideration; for Christians can be perfect in moral purity and perfect in their lives so far as they have understanding and ability—a relative perfection— and *no more is required of them*. Absolute perfection requires absolute knowledge, and such is not a characteristic of mankind. The practical standard, however, which we shall proceed to establish as the one clearly and consistently maintained in the New Testament, is that *highest development of Christian ideals possible under the circumstances*, and this implies *a constant upward progression towards the ideal*. The proof of these assertions will appear when we come to illustrate them with apostolic examples.

In a former chapter we have shown that it is a characteristic tendency of the religious nature to sanctify everything that is conceived to be truth and to incorporate such things into her system. And when thus sprinkled with the holy water of consecration, the conscience, being obligated by faith, enforces all of its precepts. Since man's knowledge of divine things is relative, instead of absolute, it is clear to a demonstration that he can not in the nature of things avoid associating with his religion some things of a purely extraneous character, which become thereby matters of faith and conscience. Now, if no restraints were exercised on this assimilating disposition of the religious nature, it is evident that the primitive simplicity and the native purity of the true heart-religion of Jesus would soon be largely hidden by an outward attire of a local character. A certain writer has said that the Italian conception of the divine is such that they paint an Italian Christ, and the Germans paint a German Christ, and the Americans paint an American Christ. But our Savior is not a local Christ; he is Lord of all. What we need is not an Oriental Christianity, an Italian Christianity, a German Christianity, nor an American Christianity, but A UNIVERSAL CHRISTIANITY. This universal Christianity

is to be realized, not by an attempt to divorce it entirely from local conditions—for such would be an impossibility—but by the exaltation and emphasis of its fundamental spiritual nature, in contrast with these evanescent characteristics, leaving it free to adapt itself to the general customs and conditions of every class of society and of every nation throughout the whole wide world.

We will take our appeal to the Bible itself in order to show that unity among the early disciples was not maintained by an attempt to produce an external uniformity, but preserved by the positive preaching of the essential nature of Christianity itself. “One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it.” Rom. 14: 5, 6. In this scripture we find a noticeable indifference toward the doctrine of the special sanctity of days. Although it was a matter of faith and conscience to some, the apostle attaches no importance to it. Again, he says: “He that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that

eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him which eateth: for God hath received him." Rom. 14: 1-3. "I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat, for whom Christ died." Ver. 14, 15. This was a subject that obligated the consciences of some of the brethren. Now, a man has no conscience-scruples aside from what he believes to be right or wrong; and whatever he believes to be a proper standard becomes thereby a matter of his faith and religion. But the statements of Paul show that these peculiar views were self-imposed, and were not a requirement of the Lord Jesus. Thus, it is apparent that good sincere Christians may honestly and unknowingly incorporate into their faith matters of a local and external character.

Upon what grounds could the apostle consistently treat the subject of these differing religious beliefs with such indifference, imposing only the one condition—that they should respect each other as true children of God? The answer is found in the fact that he recognized these principles as

being purely external, forming no essential part of the religion of Jesus Christ. Notice the emphatic language in which he draws the contrast between the great foundation truth and this cumbersome appendage attached to it: "*The kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.* For he that *in these things* serveth Christ is acceptable to God and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another." Ver. 17-19.

It may be objected that the conditions referred to in this chapter do not represent a normal state--that they merely refer to the Jewish Christians, some of whom still felt themselves bound by the precepts of the Mosaic law, while others, having obtained more light, had advanced to greater liberty; or else that the class who were free from these conscience-scruples were the Gentile Christian believers, who had never been under the law. This limitation, however, does not change the nature of the case nor lessen the force of its application; for the apostle shows clearly that the basis of Christian fellowship and unity lies in the fundamental nature of Christianity itself, thus drawing a positive dividing-line between its essential character and man's enlightenment, or lack

of enlightenment, on things of an external nature. What a beautiful Spirit in Christianity, thus accommodating itself to those of different attainments, when they have experienced the divine work of moral transformation into the state of Christ-likeness!

The Gentile Christians also had a similar experience, as we learn from the eighth chapter of First Corinthians. Some of them, it seems, so despised the heathen worship from which they had been delivered that they boldly ate of the meat that had been offered in sacrifice to idols. A council of the apostles at Jerusalem (Acts 15) decided that the Gentiles should "abstain from meats offered to idols." It is evident, though, that this injunction was not given as a definite Christian standard, but was merely a temporary expedient; for Paul teaches in this chapter that an idol is nothing and that the meat is not affected one way or the other. He shows, however, that some were puffed up because of the knowledge of the truth which they possessed, and were thus ignoring the weak conscience of their brethren of lesser light, a procedure that was wrong; and he exhorted them to abstain, on that account, from foods offered to idols. Otherwise he shows that it is all right to use them. See 1 Cor. 10:25-29.

We wish to carry this subject further and to show in the life and the teaching of this apostle a still greater exhibition of this pliable nature of Christianity. Though he proclaimed many truths which point toward an ideal state, yet, in reality, he adapted those principles, to a great extent, to the general conditions of the times, and thus established a practical working standard. Clement of Rome, his contemporary, affirms that Paul "was a preacher both to the East and the West; [that] he taught the whole world righteousness."¹ This great apostle gives the secret of his universal success in the words, "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. And this I do for the gospel's sake." 1 Cor. 9: 22, 23. This shows that he knew how to adjust himself to external conditions. He further says, "Unto the Jews I became as a Jew that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ), that I might gain them that are without law." Ver. 20, 21.

We should not conclude that the apostle here refers only to some matters of minor importance,

1 First Epistle of Clement, Book V.

such as a few insignificant customs of dress or of worship. The record shows plainly that (with the exception of the one fundamental truth of heart-salvation through Jesus Christ, without which there is no true Christianity) some of the greatest principles of truth revealed in the gospel system were thus accommodated to the general conditions and state of society then existing. The necessity of such a course will be shown in a future chapter. Here it is sufficient to assert the fact and to establish it by reference to the Scriptures.

With the gospel originated the doctrine of the equality of all men before God. "For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him." Rom. 10:12. "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ." 2 Cor. 5:10. "There is no respect of persons." Col. 3:25. "There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free." Col. 3:11.

With such teaching it would be an easy matter to conceive an ideal standard of the equality of all men here on earth. But did the apostle attempt to apply the grand principle of the brotherhood of man in that way? No; for he conformed it to the various strata of society as then exist-

ing, from necessity, and even went so far as to recognize the unnatural institution of slavery and to adapt the principles of the gospel to that system. There is no record in the New Testament that the early Christians ever set themselves in direct opposition to that system. On the other hand, Paul gave this instruction: "Exhort servants to be obedient unto their own masters, and to please them well in all things; not answering again; not purloining, but showing all good fidelity; that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Savior in all things." Tit. 2:9, 10. Again, he says: "Servants, be obedient unto them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart as unto Christ; not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; with good will doing service, as to the Lord and not to men: knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free." Eph. 6:5-8. This shows the attitude of the apostle with respect to the converted slave.

Now let us notice the instruction given to the saved masters. Did he direct them to turn their slaves loose? No; he did not. But he goes on to say, "And ye, masters, do the same things unto

them, forbearing threatening; knowing that your Master also is in heaven; neither is there respect of persons with him." Eph. 6:9. And when under his labors Onesimus, a fugitive slave, became converted, Paul sent him back to Philemon, his master. (It was on this occasion that he wrote the New Testament epistle bearing that name.) While the apostle recognized the true value of this slave, referring to him as being then "above a servant, a brother beloved," he also recognized the claim of Philemon, and said, "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee aught, put that on mine account; I Paul have written it with mine own hand, I will repay it."

As we shall have occasion to refer to this subject again, an extensive discussion will not be necessary in this place. We may rest assured, however, that if the apostle were here today, he would approve of our abolition of slavery and would congratulate us for the progress made in that direction toward the ideal state. But the great problem is not entirely solved yet, and so the gospel principle of the equality of all men still requires adaptation to meet the present condition of the race.

We will take another example of this principle of accommodation, although it may be properly

classed as another division of the preceding subject—woman's social condition. In ancient nations women occupied a very inferior position, and they do in the heathen nations of the present day. Christianity was the first religion to attribute real dignity and honor to womankind. The first and greatest discourse ever delivered to mankind revealing the true nature of the being of God and his universal spiritual worship, was given by our Lord at the Samaritan well-side to—a woman. The mortal so highly favored as to first behold the lovely form of our risen Christ was—a woman. And a woman was the first messenger sent to proclaim the great fact of the resurrection. If woman was foremost in the Edenic fall, she also figures prominently in the redemption. On the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit descended on the servants and on the handmaidens alike. The apostle also recognizes her equality in Christ in the words, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, *there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.*" Gal. 3:28.

With such teaching, we might attempt to form an ideal conception of a state of equality of the sexes here on earth. But was such the practical standard of the apostle at that time? No; it was not. The record shows that he accommodated this

principle to the existing social conditions, and in some cases taught the subjection of woman to man *even in the Oriental sense*. Thus, the veil, which custom ordained should be worn by the woman as "a covering, in sign that she is under the power of her husband" (1 Cor. 11:11, margin), was positively enjoined. "The head of the woman is the man. . . . Every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with her head uncovered dishonoreth her head"—her husband. "If the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered." Vers. 4-6. A careful study of this chapter (see verse 16) shows that the apostle was not endeavoring to establish some new custom—for the general tenor of his writings proves his attachment to the internal first principles—but he was merely adapting the Christian religion to the general conditions, by recognizing an old established custom, which we know to be as ancient at least as the time of Rebecca. Gen. 24:65.

But we are not yet done with this division of the subject. In pagan nations women are allowed to take no part in the general religious worship, and in some cases they are not permitted even to appear in the public services, except a certain privileged class attached to the temples of sen-

suality. In the city of Corinth, which was devoted to Venus, the goddess of lust, a very low estimate was placed on the honor of womanhood, for the leading women of the city were the sacred prostitutes. Now, the Corinthian church was composed principally of the converted heathen and was surrounded with idolatrous influences. Thus, under the circumstances it was practically impossible, in view of the general sentiment, to grant women a position of equality with men. So the apostle gave this instruction: "Let your women keep silence in the church: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn anything, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." 1 Cor. 14: 34, 35. Not alone at Corinth, but wherever the public sentiment required the utter subjection and silence of women, the apostle evidently could not do otherwise than to grant the general feeling some degree of recognition.

Now let us contrast these circumstances with another set of conditions. Among the Hebrews the women occupied a social position far superior to that of their sisters in heathendom. Their national law especially provided for them, rigidly

enjoined the most careful morality, and preserved in comparative purity the institution of the family; and for centuries motherhood was especially sanctified by the expectation that a woman of Israel would give birth to the Messiah. Women frequently rose to positions of prominence, as Deborah, who was a prophetess and the leader of the nation, and who directed the armies of Israel to victorious conflict. They were also connected honorably with the temple service. At the time of the birth of the Savior we find the aged prophetess Anna abiding in the temple, serving God with fastings and prayers night and day; and when the infant Christ was brought in, "*she gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Israel.*" Luke 2:37, 38.

Where is the case on record of the apostles ever prohibiting Jewish women from free participation in public worship? It does not exist. From the time of the Pentecostal outpouring on the women they continued to enjoy a great degree of freedom. Philip the evangelist "had four daughters, virgins, which did prophesy." Acts 21:9. And Paul also refers to women that "labored with him in the gospel" (Phil. 4:3)—though probably not at Corinth. "I am made all things to

all men, that I might by all means save some. To the Jews I became as a Jew that I might gain the Jews. . . . To them that are without law [the Gentiles] as without law . . . that I might gain them that are without law. And this I do for the gospel's sake."

This subject might be drawn out indefinitely by showing the same principle of adaptation applied in other directions by the apostles, but the foregoing should be sufficient to establish the thought that they reduced the Christian principles to a practical working standard—and the standard was *the highest consistent with the circumstances*. The all-important point in their teaching was the spiritual relation of the soul to God, as so clearly expressed in the text before quoted: "For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God and approved of men." The apostles did not originate the gospel, but they were sent with authority to preach the gospel; therefore we are to consider their writings as a commentary on the doctrine of Christ, and their manner of working as showing the proper spirit and method of its interpretation—a model for all succeeding ages. And while this primitive sim-

plicity of Christianity, implanting its sweet spirit deep in the hearts of men, was maintained, and allowed to work gradually in the solving of external problems, what a power of righteousness it exhibited to the world! Technical theology scarcely occupied a place of importance in the primitive church, while since the development of that spirit of dogmatism which has characterized to a great extent all succeeding history, pure, fundamental Christianity has suffered more from her professed friends than from the assaults of her foes.

It is necessary in this connection to draw a line of distinction between the lack of truth and the propagation of error; for, without this balancing feature, the work of accommodation and adaptation could, as is evident, easily be carried to the point of robbing Christianity of nearly all of her true doctrinal standards. Such really resulted in the early centuries. Through their long preparatory course the Jews had become so thoroughly established in certain fundamental truths respecting the true God and his relations with the race that, with the special training received from the ministry of Christ, the first preachers, who were chosen from among the Jews, were fully qualified to be the religious instructors of

the world, and the great principles of the gospel were safe in their hands. But at a later date, and in other hands, the gospel suffered; for men attempted to reconcile it with the prejudices of the heathen by adopting a large part of the principles and the beliefs of paganism, a course which terminated in a great heresy—Roman Catholicism.

From the scriptures cited in this chapter, and many others of like nature, it is evident that in the primitive church the man who was in possession of heart-regeneration, whatever his deficiency in understanding in other respects, was not unchristianized, but was regarded as a true brother in Christ. As long as he possessed the Spirit of Christ, which is humble and teachable, his mere lack of enlightenment occasioned no inharmony in the church. But the New Testament also reveals the fact that when men became exalted and persisted in teaching doctrine contrary in spirit to the essential nature of true Christianity and its foundation principles, they were regarded as *heretics* and as unworthy of the confidence of true believers. Therefore we conclude that it is not the absence of divine enlightenment in the Christian, but the *presence* (which is usually followed by the *propagation*) of that which is essentially false and antagonistic to the real character of the

Christian religion, that determines the question of heresy and of the soul's relationship to God. With this clear distinction we have laid the basis for a proper understanding of that method of conformity and of adaptation which has been pointed out in the ministry of Paul.

From the time that Roman Catholicism became firmly established and her theology settled, she held unyielding sway over the minds and the consciences of men, determining all questions of faith, of morals, and of external customs and practises. Men under her jurisdiction were obliged to profess faith in all of her dogmas whether, in reality, they understood and believed them or not. And every system that sets up an external creed—written or unwritten, true or false—unyielding and unaccommodating in its nature to the general conditions of society is an unwarranted addition to that simple original Christianity as taught and practised by the first apostles of our Lord. In all their writings in the New Testament they nowhere lay down specific directions in these things for the government of God's people in succeeding ages, but they merely enunciate general principles, which require interpretation and application in the spirit of their methods according to ever-changing conditions.

If history shows anything, it proves to a certainty that the efforts to produce and maintain unity among Christians by external uniformity have resulted in driving them apart. Dogmatism is the fruitful source of all sectarianism. Why not drop back to the good old apostolic standard of genuine heart-experience and holy simplicity, and then rest assured that "if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal"—in his own good time—"even that unto you"? More whole-hearted religion, and fewer theological niceties, is what the world needs; more of that grand fundamental element that changes the hearts of men to purity and uprightness, and less of that arbitrary dogmatism that rashly judges the state of one's soul by the buttons on the coat or the presence of pleats in the waist—leaving these external questions to a free and easy adjustment in accordance with the circumstances and the general customs and conditions of society. *Such is PRACTICAL CHRISTIANITY.*

INFLUENCES, CONFLICTS,
AND
ULTIMATE TRIUMPH
OF
CHRISTIANITY.

CHAPTER XII.

GENERAL INFLUENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

We now wish to notice the effects of the influences of Christianity on the general state of society. The religion of the Bible makes itself felt everywhere; for it changes the disposition of the hearts of all true believers into a state of moral purity, and it also exerts a powerful elevating influence upon all who come in contact with it. "Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people." Prov. 14:34.

Christ expressed the highest form of human duty in the words, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God . . . and thy neighbor." Luke 10:27. In this divine command we have, clearly stated, the fact of man's twofold relationship—the duty that he owes to his God, and his obligations to mankind. In preceding chapters we have enlarged on the thought of our relationship with the Almighty and the means by which the soul is brought into that blessed state of sweet communion with its Maker; in this chapter we wish to show that Christianity in its practical working extends beyond the sphere of individual experience and comes into direct contact with the world at large, producing beneficial

results. The Abrahamic covenant was that in Christ all the families of the earth should be blessed. Now, while mankind, generally speaking, are not enjoying the salvation of Jesus Christ, still the whole world is being "blessed" in an important sense, as we shall show, by the institutions of society that owe their origin to the religion of the Bible.

This examination of the general influences of Christianity revives the debated subject as to whether the world is getting better or worse. The Scriptural text relied on by those who take the pessimistic view is 2 Tim. 3:13: "But evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived." There is room for considerable misunderstanding in either view, but I wish to state that part of the discussion on this scripture relative to the subject is usually based on a wrong premise, by reading into the text something that the apostle did not state. He did not say that the whole world was getting worse, for that would include all classes of people. And while he describes the future history of that particular class of men, he places in contrast and parallel with them the description of a worthier class; and therefore our conclusions can not be logical and true without taking both divisions into considera-

tion. Thus, he says: "But continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and hast been assured of, knowing of whom thou hast learned them; and that from a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable* for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for instruction in righteousness: *that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*" Vers. 14-17. The two classes stand in contrast thus: While evil men and seducers wax worse and worse, good men, *through the influence of the Holy Scriptures*, get better until, in the salvation of Jesus Christ, they become "*perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*" Now, if we wish to consider the matter of general conditions in the world, we can not decide rightly by observing only what evil men are doing, but we must also take into consideration what good men are accomplishing when they are "*thoroughly furnished unto all good works.*"

It is probable that the words "evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived," refer directly to the rise and development of that spirit of apostasy which at a later period cursed the world with a false relig-

ion. In his First Epistle to Timothy Paul mentions the matter thus: "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving of them which believe and know the truth." Chap. 4: 1-3. In his Second Thessalonian Epistle the apostle refers to it in language more emphatic, declaring that "the mystery of iniquity doth already work" and that the "man of sin" would "be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God." "Because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. . . . God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." Chap. 2: 3, 4, 7, 10-12. Peter describes the same class in these words: "But there were false prophets among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the

Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways: by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." 2 Pet. 2:1, 2.¹

But, admitting the full force of all these powers of wickedness, we see that there is, however, a strong positive element in Christianity that we must reckon with—a power possessing such inherent energy that it has worked mighty revolutions in society, as we shall soon see, and is today the basis of all well-organized government and the foundation of modern civilization. The light of Christianity was not given to be hidden under a bushel—to be secluded in the recesses of the hearts of true believers—but God intended that it should give light to all in the house, whether they possessed the lamp or not.

It is certain that if the gospel had not come to man the whole wide world would still have been in the darkness of sinful night, perhaps in that awful condition of the heathen described by the apostle in the first chapter of Romans; but the entire world is not in that condition, and the change has been effected by the gospel of Christ. Therefore we conclude that Christianity has bettered the

¹ For a further consideration of this part of the subject see the subsequent chapter "False Religion."

general state of mankind in the exact proportion of its acceptance. "Ye are the salt of the earth," said Christ to his disciples; and, again, "Ye are the light of the world." Consequently the greater the number of true believers, and the more widespread the principles of the gospel become, the greater are the profits that accrue to the race. This conviction has inspired the hearts of the missionaries of Jesus who have labored with untiring zeal to evangelize the world.

That the gospel was not to be confined to the inward experiences of believers, but was intended to become a powerful factor in society, is shown by the teaching of the Scriptures themselves. We will refer to a prophecy in Daniel. Nebuchadnezzar had a dream which the prophet states thus: "Thou, O king, sawest, and behold a great image. . . . This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away:

and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth." Dan. 2:31-35. The prophet interpreted the four chief divisions of this image as signifying four great universal kingdoms, beginning with the Babylonian as the first, or head of gold. They stand in order thus: Babylonian, Medo-Persian, Grecian, and Roman. The stone which was cut out without hands struck the fourth, or Roman, division of this image, and the event is interpreted by the prophet in these words: "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but *it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms*, and it shall stand forever." Ver. 44.

In fulfilment of this prediction the kingdom of God appeared in the days of the fourth, or Roman, kingdom. "Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent ye and believe the gospel." Mark 1:14, 15. This kingdom of God, although spiritual in its nature and pertaining primarily to the hearts of true believers and consisting of "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost" (Rom. 14:17), was

destined, nevertheless, so to alter the state of society as to break down the heathen government of Rome, that mighty power which had "devoured the whole earth" by the force of its arms. The disciples of the Cross possessed a power irresistible, and soon paganism in dying struggles relinquished its grip of centuries and sank to its doom. Though suffering some losses and reverses, the divine kingdom of God has survived and is still marching onward; it has become a great mountain which will yet fill the whole world. The greatest historians acknowledge its moral power. Says Macaulay: "It was before the Deity embodied in a human form, walking among men, partaking of their infirmities, leaning on their bosoms, weeping over their graves, slumbering in the manger, bleeding on the cross, that the prejudices of the synagogue, and the doubts of the Academy, and the pride of the portico, and the fasces of the licitor, and the swords of thirty legions, were humbled in the dust." And Lecky says that Christianity has "covered the globe with countless institutions of mercy, absolutely unknown to the whole pagan world. It has indissolubly united in the minds of men the idea of supreme goodness with that of active and constant benevolence."

In a parable Christ said that "the kingdom of

heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." Matt. 13:33. Though the leaven works slowly, yet it finally diffuses itself throughout the whole mass. So, also, the principles of the gospel enunciated centuries ago have quietly and imperceptibly dispersed themselves throughout the world until the whole rank and file of society is indebted to the Christian religion.

Dorchester calls attention to the widespread dissemination of Christian sentiments in the world's literature, art, and song, in these words: "Take Christ out of literature; take Christian theology out of literature; take Christian ideas and sentiment out of literature; take Christian history and institutions out of literature; take Christian charity and tenderness out of literature; take the Christian idea of immortality out of literature, and what vacuums will be produced! Whole volumes will disappear by thousands and by thousands of editions. Entire chapters will be torn from numberless volumes; millions of pages will be mutilated by the remorseless scissors, and logical order and continuity will be turned into chaos. Whole shelves and entire alcoves in our libraries will be emptied. Christ is the greatest element in the world's literature. . . .

"Take the person of Christ and everything relating to him out of art; take the Madonna out of art; take Old Testament and New Testament scenes out of art; take the early church, the mediæval church, and the modern church out of art; take Christian temples, cathedrals, monuments, asylums, cemeteries, hospitals, etc., out of art; take Christian ideals out of art; take Christian martyrs, prophets, heroes, reformers, statesmen, explorers, and philosophers out of art; take out of art every conception, every lineament, every shade, every beauteous light, every softening hue, every inspiring hope borrowed from Christianity, and what would we have left? Picture galleries would be robbed and despoiled, and parlors and halls deprived of their choicest ornaments.

"What meagerness of song among all pagan nations! Few have a just conception of it. Christianity is the only religion that goes singing its way through the world. Infidelity never sings."¹

Sir Walter Scott said, "I would, if called upon, die a martyr for the Christian religion, so completely is (in my poor opinion) its divine origin proved by its beneficial effects on the state of society."

There can be no enduring civilization independ-

1 Problem of Religious Progress, pp. 492-494.

ent of morality. The history of the past shows clearly that whenever immorality reigns, nations go down to extinction. Now, the purest standard of morals the world has received is that contained in the gospel of Jesus Christ; and wherever that gospel has had its effect, the result has been a higher conception of right and duty, and therefore a corresponding advance in civilization. De Tocqueville has well said, "The safeguard of morality is religion; and morality is the best security of law, as well as the surest pledge of freedom."²

The Jewish people possessed a law enjoining the closest morality. And as the nation was continually inspired with the expectation of a coming Messiah, this future hope and glorious anticipation furnished a strong influence favorable to the conservation of their national institutions, and therefore preserved them in a state superior to that of the people of other nations. Now, Christianity furnishes the strongest inducements possible to a holy life, and thus brings into prominence the principle of morality, which is prerequisite to an advanced state of civilization. The well-defined Christian doctrine of immortality, which carries with it the thought of accountability to God in a future state, has done more to hold in check

² Dem. in Am., Chap. II, p. 40.

the vile passions of men than have all the laws that have ever been put on the statute-books of nations. In fact, the laws of men are in many instances made effective by the recognition of the fact that they express the will of the moral Governor of the universe. Thus, Cicero in fiery oratory appealed impassionately to the gods, and William H. Seward exclaimed, "There is a higher law than the Constitution." In heathenism, however, a high standard of morality and righteousness can not be made binding upon the people by appealing to their gods; for their deities, as we have shown before, are generally conceived to be of immoral character themselves. But the knowledge of the God of the Bible, who is revealed as holy and just, requiring men to walk before him in uprightness and purity of life, exercises a powerful influence over the human mind.

Remove from a people the belief in immortality, and immediately the strongest incentive to right living disappears, and the whole aim and object of life shrinks to the Epicurean standard—"Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die." The steadfast belief in a future state has been to millions of people the polar star that has determined the direction of their traveling. Even the author of "Vestiges of Civilization" acknowledges the whole-

some influence of this belief; for he says, "The services which it thus rendered, the social advancement which it wrought, ought to be remembered by unbelievers, whether atheists or theists, in their blind invectives against its great natural representative, *the Christian religion*."¹

Remove from people the fear of God, and all the baser passions, turned loose to run without restraint, will plunge the world into the frightful anarchy of fiends incarnate. Such was the case in the French Revolution. When the infidel philosophers had laughed the principles of virtue and of morality out of the world, when all of the ties that bind society together in the fear of God and of future retribution had been trampled under foot, the storm broke in all of its desolating fury upon the nation. Religion regarded as a delusion, God as a creation of the fancy, marriage as a farce, and immortality as a lie, the fearful excesses of sinful humanity knew no bounds. Well did Coleridge say: "If a man is not rising upward to be an angel, depend upon it, he is sinking downward to be a devil. He can not stop at the beast. The most savage of men are not beasts. They are worse, a great deal worse." When released from the restraining and elevating influences of Chris-

1 Part II, Chap. 2.

tianity, mankind naturally runs toward deeper sin. How clearly the history of the past illustrates this statement! And even Hume, able man that he was, only betrayed the natural consequences of infidelity when he advocated adultery as a proper thing. "Adultery," said he, "must be practised if men would obtain all the advantages of life; that if generally practised, it would in time cease to be scandalous; and that, if practised secretly and frequently, would by degrees come to be thought no crime at all."¹

As there can be no permanent civilization of a highly advanced order independent of morality; so, too, there can be no lasting morality independent of that religion which, in contradistinction to all others, inculcates the principle of morality in the hearts of men. It is a well-known fact that with paganism the more widespread its doctrines became, the more its devotees gravitated downwards toward the lowest level of immorality. But we shall see that the reverse has been the case in the history of Christianity.

Where are the principles of love and mercy taught? In Christian countries. Where do the great inventions which contribute to the comfort

¹ As quoted by Tefft from Dr. Parker's *Paraclete*, p. 322.

and the well-being of the race originate? In Christian countries. Where do we find the highest type of civil government? In Christian countries. Where the highest morality? In Christian countries. Where the grandest intellectual achievements? In Christian countries. Who unselfishly and at great sacrifice labor for the general good of mankind? Christians. Who build the old people's homes, orphan asylums, schools for the blind, and thousands of other institutions which bless the world in the present age? Christians. Who stand foremost in all reformatory movements and call mankind to a higher plane of living? Christians. Who are the noblest types of exalted manhood and womanhood, the purest examples on the earth? Christians. Who are ever drawing men upwards toward the ideal state of heavenly joys and eternal felicity? Christians. What a blessing is true Christianity! "Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

Contrast this condition with paganism. Not a dozen distinguished men have been produced by all heathenism since the golden age of Rome. Who can name one during the past sixteen centuries? Where are the works of love and of mercy for the blessing and the elevation of mankind? They do not exist. If it be objected that not all of the

enlightenment and of the advancement in modern civilization is the direct work of Christians, we reply that it has taken place in Christian countries, through men who had the advantages of Christian education or were surrounded by Christian influences, and who built upon the foundation of civil institutions *made possible by Christianity*. And the recent advancement in heathen nations is due to Christian influences and contact with this civilization.

Most of the distinguished men of skeptical inclinations have given credit in one way or another to the religion of Jesus Christ in its wholesome effects on society. The astronomer Laplace, of nebular hypothesis fame, in his last days said to Professor Sedgwick with reference to Christianity in England, "I have lived long enough to know what at one time I did not believe—that no society can be upheld in happiness and honor without the sentiments of religion." Rousseau acknowledges the moral power of the Bible; Amherley "extols it beyond any other work existing among men"; and the learned Huxley desired its retention in the schools, considering it indispensable for sound ethical education.

It is not too much to say that modern civilization owes its existence to the influences of Chris-

tianity. Had it not been for its purifying, exalting tendencies, we might today be in the same condition as were the Britons formerly, whose priests, the Druids, offered up human sacrifices to imaginary deities; or like our Gothic ancestors, who delighted in plunder, cruelty, and bloodshed. In view of these great changes, it is not remarkable that the historian Lecky should say, "Christianity, the life of morality, has regenerated the world"; nor that Froude should say, "All that we call modern civilization, in a sense which deserves the name, is the visible expression of the transforming power of the gospel."¹ Charlemagne endeavored to elevate the barbarous nations of Western Europe by the spread of Christianity among them. And Sir Thomas Erskine tells us how all these moral changes in the nations have been effected, in these words: "It was only by exalting and purifying the moral principles of society, by overcoming the natural selfishness of the human heart, by enforcing the sacred duties of charity to all men, and by raising a just conception of the equal claims of mankind upon the mercy and beneficence of the Creator, that the Christian faith could temper the government of states."²

1 Short Studies, II, p. 39.

2 Democracy in England, Vol. I, Chap. 6.

Surely the little stone of Nebuchadnezzar's dream which smote the image has become a great mountain whose influence is felt throughout the whole world. But it has taken the combined efforts of all the saints of past ages to give Christianity this moral force. It has taken the beheading of Paul, the stoning of Stephen, the devouring by wild beasts of Ignatius, the piercing of Polycarp, the burning at the stake of Huss, Ridley, and Latimer—scaffold and spear, cross and rack, faggot and sword—yes, it has required all of the martyr groans and sighs to secure the glorious result. To these heroes of the past we owe a debt of gratitude that we shall never be able to repay.

“Martyrs who left for our reaping
Truths you had sown in your blood.”

—*Moore.*

CHAPTER XIII.

PROGRESS IN THE SOCIAL STATE,

Having observed in a general way the beneficial results of the influences of the gospel in the world, we will now call attention to some particular advances in the social state which have been effected by Christianity. Although these changes occurred by a gradual evolution, still we find that the mighty power which was behind and under these forward movements, and which accelerated their progress, was the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Where among pagan nations do we find such a constant upward development as has taken place in those countries under the influence of Christianity? The natural immobility of mankind is shown by Professor Maine, as quoted by Dorchester, in these words: "The stationary condition of the human race is the rule, the progressive the exception. . . . It is most difficult for a citizen of Western Europe to bring home thoroughly to himself the truth that the civilization which surrounds him is a rare exhibition in the history of the world. . . . The greatest part of mankind has never shown a particle of desire that its civil institutions should be improved since the moment when ex-

ternal completeness was first given to them, by their embodiment in some permanent record. . . . Instead of civilization expanding the law, the law has limited the civilization."

We will begin by considering the general state of morals in the Roman empire just prior to, and at the time of, the introduction of Christianity and its earliest propagation. And let it be remembered that this is the period so often referred to as the golden age of Rome—the age which witnessed the brilliant successes of Horace, Ovid, Livy, Virgil, Cicero, and Seneca. Livy gives us an introduction to the subject in the words, "We can neither bear our vices nor our remedies." In a preceding chapter we pictured the state of morals in Greece, which all the teaching of the philosophers was unable to alter, and referred to the fact that it was no better in Rome. Though Seneca as a teacher bears the reputation of being an excellent moralist, yet he was utterly unable by all of his precepts to alter the public state of open and excessive wickedness. He has given us in his own words a description of the evil prevailing in his day: "All things are full of iniquity and vice. More crimes are committed than can be remedied by force. A monstrous contest of wickedness is carried on. Daily the lust increases; daily the

sense of shame diminishes. Casting away all regard for what is good and honorable, pleasure runs riot without restraint. Vice no longer hides itself; it stalks forth before all eyes. So public has iniquity become, so mighty does it flame up in all hearts, that innocence is no longer rare—it *has ceased to exist.*"¹

If we are to believe the records that have come down to us, the philosopher himself was unable to resist the awful tide of public wickedness. Tefft has quoted the German historian Uhlhorn with reference to the conditions prevailing at this period, and I will here reproduce the quotation:

"The same Seneca who could discourse so finely upon the abstemiousness and contentment of the philosopher, who, on all occasions, paraded his contempt for earthly things as nothingness and vanity, amassed, during the four years of his greatest prosperity and power, a fortune of three hundred million sesterces (over fifteen million dollars); and, while writing a treatise on 'Poverty,' had in his house five hundred citrus tables—tables of veined wood brought from Mount Atlas—which sometimes cost as much as twenty-five thousand dollars, and even seventy thousand dollars. The same Seneca who preached so much about

1 De Ira, II 9.

purity of morals was openly accused of adultery with Julia and Agrippina, and led his pupil Nero into still more shameful practises. He wrote a work on 'Clemency,' yet had, beyond question, a large part of Nero's atrocities on his conscience. It was he, too, who composed the letter in which Nero justified before the Senate the murder of his own mother. What was accomplished, then, by such ethical homilies as Seneca's? . . . That very Serenus whom he guided so like a father-confessor, was unable to withstand the infection of Nero's court: he it was who brought about Nero's amour with Acte. This period, as well as others, affords proof of the indissoluble connection between faith and morals. Restricting the question to the imperfect morality of heathenism, we see even here, that, when faith goes, morals perish with it."¹

With such examples of shocking immorality among the leaders in the nation's affairs, it is not surprising that the general public sentiment on moral questions sank to the lowest level, and that the people were entirely corrupted by the greatest vices. The historian continues his description of this reign of crime:

"Friends exchanged wives; and it was not con-

¹ Conflict of Christianity and Heathenism, Book I, Chap. 2.

sidered in the least dishonorable to employ the name of friendship for the purpose of seducing a friend's wife. Seneca goes so far as to affirm that marriage is contracted only because adultery affords a new and piquant charm. Matrimonial fidelity was made a subject of ridicule. 'Whoever has no love affairs is despised,' says Seneca. Not only did the theater and the circus afford opportunities for beginning and continuing amorous intrigues, the temples were not too holy, nor the brothels too foul for them. It came to pass (and a more horrible symptom of demoralization can scarcely be imagined) that ladies of high birth had themselves enrolled in the police register of common prostitutes, in order that they might abandon themselves entirely to the most wanton excesses. . . . The blessing of children was only a burden. Infanticide, and a yet more shameful practise, were not regarded as crimes."

The games in which the Roman populace delighted were demoralizing in the extreme. They cared little for the tragedy of the theater, for they required more of the real tragedy in the arena. Thousands of beasts were imported from Northern Europe, Asia, and Africa to supply their animal-baitings, that the multitude might enjoy the terrible fascination of witnessing these ferocious

beasts in terrific encounter in the amphitheater. When this form of amusement ceased to satiate their lust for excitement, gladiatorial contests were introduced; and as the morals of the nation declined, the love for these terrible encounters increased to a perfect frenzy. At first slaves or captives in war supplied the heroes and the victims, but eventually the passion became so intense that people of every rank—desperate criminals, free citizens, senators, and even women—engaged in the deadly conflict. They fought on the floor of the arena in every conceivable way—on foot, on horseback, in chariots, in pairs, and in companies. Training-schools were established in order to fit the contestants for the encounter. Men exhibited these shows in order to acquire social position. Professional gladiators traveled over the country, giving private exhibitions; while even the children on the streets imitated in their play the horrible work of their elders. Can a more corrupt and horrible state of public sentiment and of morality be imagined? So general was the infection of licentiousness that “in the Roman baths thousands of men and women were abandoned, without shame *en masse*, to the lowest crimes.” It was no unusual thing for brothels to be publicly consecrated to the gods.

Nor was this condition of public morals confined to the Romans alone. We should not err greatly were we to give this description almost a universal application. Even the Jews had become so far corrupted from the purifying faith of their fathers that a strong current of immorality had set in. The historian Mosheim says: "The state of the Jews was not much better than that of the other nations at the time of Christ's appearance in the world. They were governed by Herod, who was himself a tributary to the Roman people. This prince was surnamed The Great, surely from no other circumstance than the greatness of his vices. . . . Under his administration, and by his means, the Roman luxury was received in Palestine, accompanied with the worst vices of that licentious people. In a word, Judea, governed by Herod, groaned under all that corruption which might be expected from the authority and the example of a prince, who, though a Jew in outward profession, was in point of morals and practise a contemner of all laws, divine and human."¹

Such was the general state of society when Christianity first made its appearance. And when we consider that all these high powers of wicked-

¹ Ecclesiastical History, Book I, Part I, Chap. 2.

ness were arrayed in hostility against the Christians because of their denunciation of these flagitious crimes, we can obtain an idea of the tremendous task that confronted the early disciples of Christ. But in the face of bitter opposition and bloody persecutions they successfully propagated a positive religion that waged war with every depraved element in human nature, and they gained the most signal moral triumphs in the history of the race. Infusing into society that sublime system of truth which brings into prominence every good trait in man's character, they gradually undermined in the public sentiment many of the time-honored customs and institutions. They succeeded in driving gladiatorial combats from the earth and in placing on the statute-books laws against many other crimes that were formerly paraded in the public view with general sanction. Eventually the government itself was won over to a position nominally Christian. Now, this remarkable transformation was not the result of the operation of the best principles that existed in heathenism, but the direct result of Christianity working in spite of heathenism.

The manner in which primitive Christianity improved moral conditions was by lifting up a higher standard of morality and justice, its doc-

trines being made obligatory upon the conscience by the authority from which they proceeded, and its nature being adapted to change the sinful disposition of men. In place of the general licentiousness, the apostles warned the people to flee fornication and all uncleanness. Instead of attending the bloody conflicts of the amphitheater, Christians were instructed to love each other, to engage in the noble work of soul-saving and of blessing mankind with deeds of charity. And instead of perpetuating the social degradation of women, Christianity exalted womankind as rapidly as circumstances permitted, and, with this elevation, developed the true standard of home ideals.

In all heathen nations women were regarded as greatly inferior to men and were made to feel their inferiority. Thus, Socrates asked, "Is there a human being with whom you talk less than with your wife?" though the great philosopher had an abundance of time to talk with other women. And these prominent men of Greece had for their companions the Aspasia and Phrynes, a class of women who would not be tolerated in good society now. Plutarch of Rome records that a member of the Senate was expelled from that body "because, in the presence of his daughter and in open day, he had kissed his wife."

With the position of the wife so vastly inferior, and the most shocking immorality existing everywhere, even in the temples of the gods under the guise of religion, and with the public sanction, it is evident that marriage possessed none of that sacred element which lies at the base of permanent family ties. Under such conditions marriage was almost a farce. In Rome divorces were granted for almost every conceivable thing. We have the record of one woman who had eight husbands in five years; Martial mentions one who married her tenth husband within one month; and Seneca declares that there were "distinguished women of noble families" who "reckoned their years, not by the number of the consuls, but by that of their husbands."

This degradation of womanhood, or we might say wifehood, and the looseness of the marriage relation was accompanied by another monstrous evil—infanticide. The custom of exposing infants had long been in force and had the sanction of the greatest philosophers. The apostle describes the Gentile world as being "without natural affection."

But the gospel of Christ exalted womankind, pronounced a blessing on motherhood, and developed true family ideals by investing matrimony

with a sacred element of a permanent character. And although under certain circumstances the apostles accommodated themselves in some respects to local conditions in regard to the social equality of men and women, still the very gospel which they preached taught that there was no difference between male and female. Such doctrine could not avoid producing an elevating effect in society.

Immediately following the apostolic period we find Ignatius exhorting: "Do not hold women in abomination, for they have given thee birth, and brought thee up. It is fitting, therefore, to love those that were the authors of our birth (but only in the Lord) inasmuch as a man can produce no children without a woman. It is right, therefore, that we should honor those who have had a part in giving us birth."¹ At a later period we find Christian teachers still more emphatically declaring the exalted state of the marriage relation and the equality of husband and wife. Thus, Tertullian, the first of the Latin Fathers, says: "Whence are we to find words enough fully to tell the happiness of that marriage which the church cements, and the obligation confirms, and the benediction signs and seals? What kind of yoke is that of two believers, partakers of one hope, one

1 Epistle of Ignatius to Hero, Chap. IV.

desire, one discipline, one and the same service? 'Two in one flesh.' Where the flesh is one, one is the spirit, too. Together they pray, together prostrate themselves, together perform their fasts; mutually teaching, mutually exhorting, mutually sustaining. *Equal are they both found in the church of God; equal at the banquet of God; equal in straits, in persecutions, in refreshments.*"² And he teaches the permanence of the marriage relation in the words, "Those whom God has conjoined man shall not separate by divorce." After speaking of the separation allowed in the gospel because of adultery, he goes on to say, "A divorced woman can not even marry legitimately." And with the Christian sacredness of marriage goes a love for offspring. Our Lord in loving words pronounced a blessing on childhood when he said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." So the sanctity of marriage, family, and home finds its strongest support in the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Peabody asserts that in the classic languages there is nothing corresponding to our word *home*.³

The Christian doctrine of the equality of men

² Tertullian, Part IV, Book II, Chap. 8.

³ Christianity and Science, p. 198.

and women, though opposed by all the customs of heathenism, gained ground nevertheless, and in the course of centuries has resulted in the social elevation of women to the high standard of the present day. There has been a constant upward progression, and today the respect and admiration of men for noble, exalted womanhood is greater than ever before in the history of the world. Although not all the nations have degraded their women equally, yet we find that Christianity is the only religion that has pronounced their final and complete emancipation from serfdom and inferiority. And since women constitute a necessary part of the human family, their social condition is a good indication of the general progress of the race. This thought is conveyed in the following words of Mason: "It matters not whether we regard the history of the remotest past or the diverse civilizations of the present, the emancipation and exaltation of women are the synonym of progress. In the mind of the individual, in the family, and in the community alike the loss of the veneration for women on the part of men and the loss of virtue and self-respect of women for themselves are the surest indication of destructive tendencies."¹

1 Woman's Share in Primitive Culture, p. 276.

If the apostle Paul were here today, he would rejoice in the change of public sentiment which the gospel has effected in civilized nations; and it seems certain that he would not require the women to keep silent in the churches nor curtail their spiritual liberties in any way, unless it should be with reference to conditions still prevailing in heathenism.

While a large amount of immorality still exists in the world, it exists as crime, and not with the general public sanction of all classes of society. A strong sentiment of morality prevents a return to the shameful conditions of the past which have already been described, and which Pope outlines in these words: "Who can be so prejudiced in their favor as to magnify the felicity of those ages, when a spirit of revenge and cruelty, joined with the practise of rapine and robbery, reigned through the world; when no mercy was shown, but for the sake of lucre; when the greatest princes were put to the sword, and their wives and daughters made slaves and concubines?"

No person possessing the least knowledge of history will venture the assertion that the general condition of morals and the respect for law, virtue, and order, which prevail in civilized society at the present day, can even be compared with the

universal conditions in the paganism of the past and in the heathenism of the present, outside of the influences of Christianity. We glory in the advancement that has been made, and still we proclaim the higher standard of the gospel that exalts the nations.

Another revolution in society, that has been effected by a gradual process through the influences of Christianity, is the abolition of slavery. As far back in the dim history of past ages as we are able to penetrate we find in existence the practise of human slavery. According to the book of Genesis, Egypt, in that early day, was a market for slaves, and Joseph was sold into servitude there. It is probable that this custom originated through kind intentions, and not through motives of inhumanity. It is certain that in the earliest warfare the victors, unable to trust their captives or to provide for them, were accustomed to put them all to death. At a later date, however, their lives were spared because of their value as slaves.

The relation of master and slave was regarded as a natural one by all the philosophers of ancient times. Thus, Aristotle refers to the slave as a mere machine possessing intelligence. The custom was universal. In Greece the slaves sometimes outnumbered the free men as much as ten

to one, though generally about three to one; and the ordinary classes were valued at a rate averaging only about eight dollars in the time of Demosthenes.

In Rome, too, we find the existence of slavery in all its horrors. In the numerous wars of the Romans an immense number of captives were secured, and these were reduced to servitude. In fact, slave-traders generally accompanied the army, and whenever a battle was fought, they were able to buy up the captives for a trifling amount and thus make large profits out of the horrible traffic in human souls. On one occasion, we are told, slaves were sold in the camp of Lucullus for a price equaling about eighty cents of our money. So great was the profit accruing from this traffic that many engaged in the occupation of kidnaping men in order to sell them.

In Sicily the number of agricultural slaves was immense, for this province supplied Rome with a large amount of corn. According to Athenæus, some of these estates possessed as many as 10,000, and even 20,000, slaves; but some regard these numbers as somewhat exaggerated. On the testimony of Pliny it is certain that one man, during the reign of Augustus, possessed as many as 4,116. And, according to Horace, it was no uncommon

thing for a person to possess 200. The most conservative estimate of the Roman slaves (Gibbon) places the number at 60,000,000, a number equaling that of the freemen; others give much higher figures. Horace seems to regard ten as the "lowest number which a person in tolerable circumstances ought to keep."

The treatment of the slaves on these Sicilian estates was almost indescribable. So great were their numbers that they were branded like cattle in order that their owners might know them, and they were compelled to toil incessantly for their masters. The old, sick, and infirm were either killed outright or else abandoned to die. All the slaves were dead in a civil sense; they had no rights that their masters were bound to respect. Justinian said, "A slave in the power of another can call nothing his own." And Caius says, "It is allowed by all nations to the lord to have power of life and death over his slave." If a master was murdered, it was no unusual thing to charge it upon his slaves and to kill the entire number, even thousands. So little were these serfs valued that they were frequently killed just for sport, in order to test some new weapon. They were compelled to go into the arena as gladiators and fight to the death, and thus furnish excitement and en-

joyment for their masters. They were crucified, beheaded, or otherwise slain for the most trivial offenses or for making the slightest mistake in carrying out the will of their lords.

Such was slavery in Rome when the gospel appeared. Christianity could not fail to come into direct conflict with such an inhuman custom, or at least with its horrible abuse. However, the apostles did not, as shown in a preceding chapter, undertake to openly denounce and oppose the institution as a whole, but merely to correct the relation of master and slave as much as possible; but they set at work the influences that were destined to undermine the system in time. Christianity was the first religion to recognize no fundamental difference between the various tribes, nations, and classes of men. Thus, the apostle Paul teaches the equality of master and servant in these words: "Art thou called being a servant? care not for it: but if thou mayest be made free, use it rather. For he that is called in the Lord, being a servant, is the Lord's freeman: likewise also he that is called, being free, is Christ's servant." 1 Cor. 7: 21, 22. From the time that the gospel was first preached we find that Christianity has ever been the friend of the slave, for the primitive church admitted no distinction between "bond and

free." The apostle required the masters to treat their slaves kindly, "forbearing threatening." Many of the most eminent Christians of the earlier days came from the servile ranks. The master's emancipation of his slaves was regarded by the Christians as a most worthy act.

Such influences, set to work, began to produce external effects in society, and by the time of Constantine we find such a change of sentiment in regard to the value of the life of slaves that that noted emperor enacted a law by which the killing of a slave by his master was made a criminal act. And by mentioning as punishable various means of putting slaves to death the emperor gives us an idea of the many torturous and terrifying methods that had been employed for this purpose. Following Constantine, numerous laws mitigated the condition of the slaves, and the growing sentiment in their favor secured their general liberty throughout Western Europe by the close of the twelfth century.

During the dark ages, however, Christianity was at a very low ebb, generally speaking, and within two centuries slavery was revived by the Portuguese. Following the piratical examples of former uncivilized ages, they made raids upon the inhabitants of Africa and carried them into captivity and

slavery. And this practise—to the everlasting shame of Christendom be it said—spread to most of the other nations of Western Europe. The unfortunate Africans fled from the coast into the interior, but the Europeans pursued them and dragged the wretched inhabitants out to civilization (?) and scattered them over the world. Thus the victory won by primitive Christianity was lost, and the battle against slavery had to be fought over again by modern Christianity after the rise of Protestantism.

But from the time that evangelical Christianity assumed a place of importance in Western Europe, we find a steadily growing aversion to slavery and the slave-traffic, and broader and nobler sentiments of humanity asserting themselves. The great Wesleyan revival seems to have been the signal for Christianity to rise and shake herself from this fearful plague that afflicted society and cast reproach upon our holy religion. The historian Macaulay attributes to Christianity the chief glory for the suppression of slavery in England.¹ So, also, does Mackintosh.²

A little over a century ago slavery was pretty general throughout the world. Large numbers of

¹ History of England, Vol. 1, Chap. 1.

² History of England, Chap. 4.

peasants in Austria, Russia, and other European countries were in a condition of serfdom; the British Colonies swarmed with slaves; and the accursed system had taken firm root here in the United States of America and in Mexico, Brazil, and various other countries. England had almost secured a monopoly of the slave-trade, but the influences of a purer Christianity now began to be felt, public sentiment began to change to hostility against the inhuman traffic, and finally the renowned Wilberforce introduced a bill in the British Parliament for the abolition of the slave-trade. However, it required "twenty years of agitation to suppress it, and twenty-six more to procure emancipation." But the long battle was fought and won, to the everlasting glory of its ablest leader.

The part that Christianity took in this struggle, in enforcing the Christian doctrine of the equality of all men, is shown in the following admirable poem by the immortal Cowper, writer of Christian hymns. This poem, which was entitled "The Negro's Complaint," was written at the time and for the occasion, and was printed and scattered throughout England, producing a profound impression. Although it is of considerable length, I reproduce it all in order to show its

sweet and beautiful spirit of Christianity as expressed in the thought of human compassion and brotherhood.

“Forced from home and all its pleasures,
Afric's coast I left forlorn,
To increase a stranger's treasures,
O'er the raging billows borne.
Men from England bought and sold me,
Paid my price in paltry gold;
But, though theirs they have enrolled me,
Minds are never to be sold.

“Still in thought as free as ever,
What are England's rights, I ask,
Me from my delights to sever,
Me to torture, me to task?
Fleecy locks and black complexion
Can not forfeit Nature's claim;
Skins may differ, but affection
Dwells in black and white the same.

“Why did all-creating Nature
Make the plant, for which we toil?
Sighs must fan it, tears must water,
Sweat of ours must dress the soil.
Think, ye masters, iron-hearted,
Lolling at your jovial boards,
Think, how many backs have smarted
For the sweets your cane affords.

“Is there, as you sometimes tell us,
Is there One who rules on high?
Has he bid you buy and sell us,
Speaking from his throne, the sky?
Ask him if your knotted scourges,
Fetters, blood-extorting screws,
Are the means which duty urges
Agents of his will to use.

“Hark! He answers. Wild tornadoes
Strewing yonder sea with wrecks,
Wasting towns, plantations, meadows,
Are the voice with which he speaks.
He, foreseeing what vexations
Afric’s sons should undergo,
Fixed their tyrants’ habitations
Where his whirlwinds answer—No!

“By our blood in Afric wasted
Ere our necks received the chain;
By the miseries which we tasted
Crossing, in your barks, the main;
By our offerings since you brought us
To the man-degrading mart,
All sustained by patience, taught us
Only by a broken heart.

“Deem our nation brutes no longer
Till some reason you shall find
Worthier of regard and stronger
Than the color of our kind.
Slaves of gold! whose sordid dealings
Tarnish all your boasted powers,
Prove that you have human feelings
Ere you proudly question ours.”

Slowly but surely advancing Christian sentiment undermined this infamous custom, and in 1834 the slaves throughout the British Colonies, 800,000 in number, were emancipated. This act was preceded five years by the proclamation of Guerrero, President of Mexico, freeing all the slaves in the republic. The bitterness of the agitation in the United States relative to this subject is still fresh in the minds of many of our

citizens. Churches were rent asunder because large bodies of Christians maintained that the practise was in its nature unchristian. Finally, however, the great battle was won: the Emancipation Proclamation was signed by Abraham Lincoln, Jan. 1, 1863, and 4,000,000 slaves thereby set free; and by a subsequent amendment to the Constitution slavery is declared forever abolished from all territory within the jurisdiction of the United States. Fifteen million serfs have since been liberated in Russia, 5,000,000 in Brazil, etc., and now we witness the practical abolition of slavery in all the civilized world.

What shall we term such a glorious result? I call it the triumph of a grand Christian principle. It has taken centuries to secure this result; but the leaven of *equality* which Christianity introduced into the world has been working during the ages and diffusing itself throughout the whole mass of society. In the very nature of things, sweeping social changes can not be instantaneous, but must be effected gradually. So well did the early Christians understand this fact that they did not attempt revolutionary efforts along this line, but adapted themselves as much as possible to the existing conditions. The seed that they sowed, however, has sprung up in time and pro-

duced fruit to the glory of God. In this we see the EVOLUTION OF CHRISTIANITY, the system by which men are led forward continually to greater heights.

The widespread dissemination of this principle of equality has done more, however, than to emancipate the slaves. It has already enlarged the sympathies and broadened the affections of all the Christian nations to an extent unparalleled in the history of the world. Although we still equip armies and navies in order jealously to guard our national interests, still it is an undeniable fact that there is a more general humane feeling that reaches forth toward the idea of the universal brotherhood of men. Let us refer to ancient conditions in order that we may, by contrast, be able to see what progress has been made in this respect.

Max Muller has said that the word "mankind" was never uttered by Socrates, Plato, or Aristotle. "Where the Greeks saw *barbarians*, we see *brethren*." This short but expressive phrase contains a vast amount of truth. It is certain that none of the ancient heathen nations possessed any idea of moral obligation toward men other than those of their own country or nation. And in many cases the ties of nationality and of blood-

relationship were not sufficient to hold them together. Thus, in Greece, although the people were kindred in origin, language, and various civil institutions, still there existed the most bitter rivalry between certain sections, as between Athens and Sparta—a condition that resulted in the long and terrible Peloponnesian war. For mankind at large they had absolutely no sympathy. The principles of love, mercy, and compassion for humanity had no part in their lives, and their conviction of right might be summed up in the words, "Might makes right." In warfare, courage, bravery, and cruelty were encouraged, but the nobler sentiments of humanity—never. On this principle it was regarded perfectly proper to enslave or kill the captives in war, to put women and children to the sword, or else to degrade the wives and the daughters of enemies to the wretched condition of concubines. Such were ancient conditions.

We are informed that when the Rhodians became masters of the Mediterranean, they made the first sea-laws in history. According to these laws, the owner that was so unfortunate as to suffer shipwreck lost all of his claims upon the wreckage. Selden says, "The laws of Rhodes are supposed to have made wreck a fiscal perquisite to the exclusion of the owner." This law was adopted

by the Romans and enlarged to the point of giving the landowner absolute possession of his property bordering on the sea and of the sea lying in front of it. By this means he was able to seize as his own property the wrecks that were driven upon his shore. This continued until modified by later emperors. Coupling this fact with the occupation of piracy, which was considered an honorable profession anciently, we find a reign of terror existing on the high seas. It is asserted that men even displayed false signals, or wilfully led vessels astray, in order that they might be shipwrecked on the rocks and thus fall a prey.

Contrast these conditions with the general state of affairs existing among those peoples that have been under the elevating influence of Christianity. Do we still have wars? Yes; but women and children are no longer slaughtered, sold into slavery, or made a prey to lustful men. Nor are the men slain in cold blood after their capture, or permanently enslaved; but they are cared for by the victors and afterwards returned to their own wives, children, and homes. And a strong, growing sentiment favors the abolition of war, as nearly as possible at least, by the formation of an international federation whose object shall be to settle all disputes by arbitration.

Christian nations have driven the pirates from the high seas of the world and have made ocean-travel almost as safe from human interference as are the agricultural pursuits of the quiet farmers. Instead of seeking to produce shipwreck, we have devised every means within the reach of human ingenuity up to the present time to secure absolute safety. We have adopted international signals by which the vessels of every nation can move on the sea without confusion. Every hidden rock and dangerous shoal is carefully indicated on the charts of navigators; innumerable lighthouses and warning-apparatus are put at the dangerous places; and the shores of the seas are dotted with life-saving stations equipped with rescuing-appliances and crews of brave, determined men.

Thus, we see that in those countries under Christian influence a greater value has come to be placed on human life and rights. This is not true of dark heathenism. "With the Bhils assassination is a pastime; with the Fans cruelty is a delight; while the Bushmen are brutal in their ferocity, and the Fijians, malignant in revenge." Herbert Spencer shows the conditions in this respect that exist among people in a savage state. He says: "In the kingdom of Uganda, where, di-

rected by the king to try a rifle presented to him by Speke, a page went to the door and shot the first man he saw in the distance; where, as Stanley tells us, under the last king, Suna, five days were occupied in cutting up thirty thousand prisoners who had surrendered, we find that an officer observed to salute informally is ordered for execution, while another, who, perhaps, exposes an inch of naked leg while squatting, or has his *mbugu* tied contrary to regulations, is condemned to the same fate."

This shameful disregard for human life obtains in all heathen nations. As Dorchester has said, "In China prisoners are incarcerated in filthy, loathsome cells, fitly called 'hells,' and left without the slightest provision, except such as friends to whom they appeal may bring. For certain crimes they are punished by torture. Wearing the 'kang,' a plank four feet square, with a hole in the center, fitted and locked around the neck, is a common method. He can not put his hands to his head and must starve unless friends feed him. He can take but two positions, sitting and standing. In from ten to twenty days the prisoner is broken down beyond recovery."

The same writer states: "Within one hundred years [He wrote this in 1881.] the criminal laws of

even the most enlightened countries were atrociously savage, and administered in a relentless spirit. Hon. Edmund Burke said he could obtain the consent of the House of Commons to any bill imposing punishment by death. English law recognized 223 capital crimes—not wholly a legacy of the dark ages, for 156 of them bore no remoter date than the reigns of the Georges.” Then he quotes the following examples from another author: “If a man injured Westminster bridge he was hanged. If he appeared disguised on a public road he was hanged. If he cut down young trees, if he shot rabbits, if he stole property valued at five shillings, if he stole anything at all from a bleach-field, if he wrote a threatening letter to extort money, if he returned prematurely from transportation—for any of these offenses he was peremptorily hanged. . . . Men who resisted the government were cut in pieces by the executioner, and their dishonored heads were exposed on Temple Bar to the derision or pity of passers-by.” In Rome, according to a law of the Twelve Tables, the debtor whose obligations remained unpaid after an imprisonment of sixty days could either be sold into slavery or cut in pieces and distributed among his creditors.

When we consider these inhuman penal inflictions

tions in heathenism, and even in civilized England at no distant period in the past, and contrast such conditions with those existing at the present time in Christian nations, we can see that considerable advance has been made in this respect. The more true Christianity spreads, the greater will be the humane sentiment, and the greater the regard for human life. These principles have so far pervaded society already that in a number of countries and in several States of the Union capital punishment has been abolished entirely. Whatever may be said in defense of capital punishment as a necessity of law under certain conditions for the prevention of crime, it is evident that the destruction of human life is not in accordance with the spiritual precepts of the gospel. And we sincerely hope that the time will come when society will be so far elevated that such executions will be no longer deemed necessary. But, aside from this, our penal institutions are constantly developing reformatory principles, and their treatment is more in accordance with the ideas of justice and humanity.

Everywhere we see a more humane feeling. Instead of regarding all other nations as enemies we begin to consider them brothers. And when severe reverses befall them, how quickly the heart

of the Christian nations begins to beat with sympathy, and Christian liberality manifests itself, as during the India famines of recent years, the Messina earthquake, and the Mount Pelee disaster. In fact, the arms of Christian brotherhood are already reaching around the world. Christian missionaries, imbued with the spirit of love for their lost brethren of other nationalities and of other races, are going forth into the dark places of the earth to labor unselfishly in the cause of their divine Master and for the good of precious immortal souls for whom Christ died. And through the influence of the gospel and the educational efforts of Christian nations the heathen governments of the world are being tempered more in accordance with the advanced development of the times, and thus a door of opportunity is now being opened for the enlightenment of millions of darkened souls.

In view of all the facts, we can not fail to attribute these propitious conditions to the influences of Christianity. These have been the means of developing our own state of civilization, and they are now working on a broader and grander scale for the universal enlightenment of the human race. While our Lord is now reigning as heaven's King in the hearts of his humble followers, still we possess a holy unrest for fields of greater op-

portunity and greater activity; and we rejoice in the exulting anticipation of the extension of his kingdom throughout the whole wide world, and sing with the poet:

“Jesus shall reign where’er the sun
Does his successive journeys run;
His kingdom, spread from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

“From north to south the princes meet,
To pay their homage at his feet;
While Western empires own their Lord,
And savage tribes attend his word.”

—*Isaac Watts.*

CHAPTER XIV.

TRUE RELIGION IN ALL THE AGES.

Having noticed some of the external effects of Christianity in the general progress of society, we wish to show in this chapter that *true Christianity* has existed during all the centuries since the incarnation of Christ. However, lest our treatment of the subject should become tedious, we will not attempt to take the matter up by centuries, but will content ourselves with a brief historical sketch giving a few examples of this spiritual teaching.

I will repeat a statement heretofore made—that true Christianity consists not in external rites and theological systems, which, however, may be associated with it, but in that inner experience of the heart called the new birth, or regeneration. Without this internal soul-work, all forms of religion are powerless to purify the life and to exalt the heart to supreme love for God. This blessed experience was the center of that gospel system which was proclaimed by the apostles, and which rang out through the Roman world in their day. “With the heart man believeth unto righteousness,” says the apostle Paul; and, again, “I

am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." And Peter says, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently: being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth forever." And James says, "Receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls."

In the period immediately following the apostles we find the doctrine of heart-regeneration and consequent purity of life occupying a prominent place in the writings of the church fathers. In the First Epistle of Clement, who was a collaborer of Paul's, the author says: "How blessed and wonderful, beloved, are the gifts of God! Life in immortality, splendor in righteousness, truth in perfect confidence, faith in assurance. *Self-control in holiness.*"¹ Again, he says, "Let a man be faithful . . . let him be pure in all his deeds."² In another place he gives this advice: "Let us pray, therefore, and implore of his mercy, that we may live blameless in love. . . . For it is writ-

1 First Epistle of Clement, Chap. XXXV.

2 Ibid., Chap. XXXVIII.

ten, 'Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not impute to him, and in whose mouth there is no guile.'"³

The illustrious Justin Martyr (A. D. 110-165) sets forth the doctrine of heart-regeneration in the following passage as a proper condition of the candidate that offers himself for the ceremonial cleansing of baptism: "As many as are persuaded and believe that what we say and believe is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting, for the remission of their sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them. Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated."⁴

The author of the Pseudo-Clementine Epistles, at a later but uncertain date, draws a clear distinction between external and internal righteousness, exalting the latter to first place in order and importance. "Our Master rebuked some of the Pharisees and scribes, who seemed to be better than others, and separated from the people, calling them hypocrites, because they purified only

3 First Epistle of Clement, Chap. L.

4 First Apology of Justin, Chap. LXI.

those things which are seen of men, but left defiled and sordid their hearts, which God alone sees. . . . For truly if the mind be purified by the light of knowledge, when once it is clean and clear, then it necessarily takes care of that which is without a man, that is, his flesh, that it may also be purified. But when that which is without, the cleansing of the flesh, is neglected, it is certain that there is no care taken of the purity of the mind and the *cleanness of the heart*.”¹

But of all the ante-Nicene statements of heart-regeneration and of its results, that have come down to us, probably the most sublime are the following from the illustrious Cyprian (A. D. 200-258), bishop of Carthage: “The one peaceful and trustworthy tranquility, the one solid and firm and constant security, is this, for a man to withdraw from these eddies of a distracting world, and, anchored on the ground of the harbor of salvation, to lift his eyes from earth to heaven; and having been admitted to the gift of God, and being already very near to his God in mind, he may boast that whatever in human affairs others esteem lofty and grand, lies altogether beneath his consciousness. . . . How stable, how free from all checks, is that safeguard! how heavenly the protection in

1 Recognitions of Clement, Chap. XI.

its perennial blessings—to be lost from the snares of this entangling world, and to be purged from earthly dregs, and fitted for the light of eternal immortality! . . . As the sun shines spontaneously, as the day gives light, as the fountain flows, as the shower yields moisture; so does the heavenly Spirit infuse itself into us. When the soul in its gaze into heaven has recognized its Author, it rises higher than the sun, and far transcends all this earthly power, and begins to be that which it believes itself to be.”²

Coming down to a later period, to the post-Nicene age, we can not pass by unnoticed the example of the renowned Augustine. This noted father was born in Africa, A. D. 354. His father was a pagan, but his mother was a sincere Christian. She endeavored by careful training to direct her son in the way of Christ; but, while at Carthage completing his education, the youth fell in with evil companions and lapsed into the depths of sin. Discovering one of the lost books of Cicero called *Hortensius*, he became interested in philosophy; but, finding nothing to satisfy his soul therein, he went over to the Manichean sect. Still dissatisfied, he finally went to Milan, where he chanced to come under the Christian influence of

2 Cyprian, First Epistle, 14.

the celebrated Saint Ambrose, bishop of that city, and was thus turned back to the teaching of his early childhood. By giving diligent attention and study to the Epistles of Paul, Augustine was brought to Christ and salvation, and his soul was made happy. He found the truth which barren philosophy could not supply. To quote the words of the historian Neander: "He found in Christ his Savior. So, all that Christ taught him was truth infallible, requiring no other confirmation. It was the highest criterion of all truth. He had himself experienced the power of this doctrine in his own soul; and this was to him a subjective testimony of its divinity and truth."¹ To this sublime experience he gives testimony in these words: "The essence of the Christian faith rests on the antagonism of two men—one, him by whom we were brought under bondage to sin; the other, him by whom we are redeemed from it." And, again, "My origin is Christ; my root is Christ; my head is Christ. The seed from which I am regenerated is the word of God, which my Lord exhorts me obediently to follow."

But while this and numerous other examples of Christian teaching and experience in this early period can be adduced, showing that the true spirit

¹ Church History, Vol. III, p. 399.

of our holy religion was still in existence on earth, we must not conclude that there was no decline in the general state of Christianity. The light of truth, which shone so brilliantly at first, gradually became darkened by the gathering clouds of superstition and error. This process continued until it culminated in what is known in history as the dark ages. Such was the sad condition of the world during many centuries. But even during the medieval period the light of true Christianity did not entirely go out; for it continued to shine in many isolated spots among bands of people, who, in different countries, passed under the various titles of Paulicians, Catharists, Poor Men of Lyons, Lombards, Albigenses, Waldenses, Vaudois, Petrobrussians, etc.

The Paulicians believed in heart-regeneration and purity of life. They rejected many of the superstitions of Romanism, such as the adoration of the Virgin and homage to the cross, and refused to recognize the priestly dignity. Relics they regarded as so many superstitions, placing no value on them whatever. And though they had some peculiar customs, their worship was pre-eminently spiritual, and free from all ritual.

The Waldenses lived in the valleys of Piedmont. "They made the Bible alone the rule of their

faith, renounced entirely the doctrines, usages, and traditions of the Roman Catholic church, and formed a separate religious society. They were therefore excommunicated as heretics, and for centuries suffered occasional persecution." They maintained the strictest moral discipline, and from the time of their origin distinguished themselves by their pure morals and their industry. They were brought into prominence through the preaching of Peter Waldus. Mosheim says concerning them: "The Archbishop of Lyons and the other rulers of the church in that province opposed with vigor this new doctor in the exercise of his ministry. But their opposition was unsuccessful; for the purity and simplicity of the religion which these men taught, the spotless innocence that shone forth in their lives and actions, and the noble contempt of riches and honor manifested in the whole of their conduct and conversation, appeared so engaging to such as had any sense of true piety, that the number of their disciples and followers increased from day to day. They accordingly formed religious assemblies, first in France, afterwards in Lombardy, whence they propagated their sect through the other provinces of Europe with incredible rapidity, and with such invincible fortitude that neither fire nor sword, nor the most

cruel inventions of merciless persecutors could damp their zeal, or entirely ruin their cause."¹

Mosheim speaks of Peter Waldus as the founder of this interesting people,² but Tefft says that "as Vaudois or by some other name, they can be traced with great certainty to the beginning of the sixth century, and probably to the days of the apostolic fathers." Neander speaks of this people as "a single link in the chain of reactions, running through the whole period of reactions of the Christian consciousness against the churchly theocratic system of the middle ages."³ In the Reformation of the sixteenth century, when the reformers were demanded to show where their religion was prior to the time of Luther, their answer was, "In the Bible, and in the valleys of Piedmont."

The greater part of the information we have of these medieval Christians has come down to us in the records of their enemies, the Roman Catholics, who counted them all heretics because of their rejecting the authority of the Pope, and time and again instituted crusades against them, martyring them by the thousands. Considerable calumny has been heaped upon some of these people by the Romish church; but as that denomination has

1 Church History, Part II, Chap. 5.

2 Ibid., Part II, Chap. 5.

3 Ibid., Vol. IV, pp. 604-616.

openly and unblushingly declared that deception and lies are perfectly justifiable when employed to further the interests of the church, we are perhaps justified in entertaining some doubts as to whether all the reports she has given out are reliable. It is possible that in their excess of zeal some of these Christians did at times act indiscreetly in some things; but, on the other hand, the most unequivocal testimony to their uprightness and purity and to their firm attachment to the blessed Word of God has been furnished us by their enemies.

Egbert, a monkish writer of that age, wrote that he had often disputed with these heretics, "a sort of people," he added, "who are very pernicious to the Catholic faith, which, like moths, they corrupt and destroy." "They are armed," said he, "*with the words of Scripture* which in any way seem to favor their sentiments, and with these they know how to defend their errors, and to oppose the Catholic truth. They are increased to great multitudes throughout all countries, to the great danger of the church [of Rome]."

Evervinus, a zealous Catholic, in a letter he wrote to the celebrated Bernard at the beginning of the twelfth century, said: "There have lately been some heretics discovered among us, near Cologne. . . . One that was a bishop among them,

and his companions, openly opposed us in the assembly of the clergy and laity, the lord archbishop himself being present, with many of the nobility, maintaining their heresy from *the words of Christ and his apostles.*" And then, after relating how they were seized by the people and committed to the flames, he goes on to say: "O holy father, were I present with you, I should be glad to ask you how these members of Satan could persist in their heresy with such constancy and courage as is rarely to be found among the most religious in the faith of Christ." He then proceeds to give an account of their belief, as follows:

"Their heresy is this: They say that the church (of Christ) is only among themselves, because they alone follow the ways of Christ, and imitate the apostles, not seeking secular gains. . . . Whereas they say to us, 'Ye join house to house, and field to field, seeking the things of this world.' They represent themselves as the poor of Christ's flock, who have no certain abode, fleeing from one city to another, like sheep in the midst of wolves, enduring persecution with the apostles and martyrs; though strict in their manner of life—*abstemious, laborious, devoted, and holy* . . . living as men who are not of the world. 'But you,' say they, 'lovers of the world, have peace with the world

because you are in it. False apostles, who adulterate the word of God, seeking their own things, have misled you and your ancestors. Whereas, we and our fathers, having been born and brought up in the apostolic doctrine, have continued in the grace of Christ, and shall continue so to the end.' . . . They affirm that the apostolic dignity is corrupted by indulging itself in secular affairs, while it sits in St. Peter's chair. They do not hold with the baptism of infants, alleging that passage of the gospel, 'He that *believeth* and is baptized shall be saved.' They place no confidence in the intercession of saints, and all things observed in the church which have not been established by Christ himself or his apostles they pronounce to be superstitious. They do not admit of any purgatory fire after death, contending that the souls of men, as soon as they depart out of the bodies, do enter into rest or punishment . . . by which means they make void all the prayers and oblations of the faithful for the deceased. . . . And as for those who were burnt, they, in defence they made of themselves, told us that this heresy had been *concealed from the time of the martyrs* [by which is doubtless meant the early period of Christianity] and that it had existed in Greece and other countries."

Although Saint Bernard was an opposer of

these people, still he testified: "If you ask them of their faith, nothing can be more Christianlike; and if you observe their conversation, nothing can be more blameless, and what they speak they make good by their actions. . . . And as to life and manners, he circumvents no man, overreaches no man, does violence to no man. He fasts much and eats not the bread of idleness, but works with his hands for his support."

Claudius, Archbishop of Turin, who joined in hunting and persecuting them to the death, said, "Their heresy excepted, they generally live a purer life than other Christians." Again, "In their lives they are perfect, irreproachable, and without reproach among men, addicting themselves with all their might to the service of God."

With this brief review of true Christianity in the medieval period, we now come to that important epoch in church history known as the Reformation. During the fifteenth century Europe began to awake from her long slumber of the middle ages with the great intellectual quickening already referred to—the Revival of Learning. In Italy, however, the Renaissance had in some respects a disastrous effect upon society, by causing a revival of paganism, and where the humanistic spirit gained complete control, it was

“disastrous to both faith and morals.” But before the close of the fifteenth century the great intellectual awakening had crossed the Alps and entrenched itself in the universities of Germany, France, and England. In Northern Europe, however, it did not confine itself to the single passion of devotion to classic literature, but combined with it a supreme love for the Christian element; hence we find the greatest scholars devoting themselves not only to the study of classical authors, but also to the most earnest and diligent perusal of the ancient Scriptures. Had it not been for this intellectual quickening, Luther would never have shaken the world by his preaching of the gospel of Christ. He was a student in the university at Erfurth, devoting himself to the study of the old schoolmen, such as Duns Scotus, Albertus Magnus, and Thomas Aquinas, and to the Greek and Latin classics—Aristotle, Cicero, and Virgil. Through his whole college course he was considered the best classical scholar in that celebrated German institution, and Melancthon tells us in his “Life of Luther” that “the whole university admired his genius.”¹

¹ Quoted by D'Aubigne, *History of the Reformation*, Book II.

It was while attending this university that Luther discovered his first copy of the Bible, while looking over the long rows of dusty books on the shelves of its library. "This book," says his biographer, "deposited upon the unknown shelves of a dark room, is soon to become the Book of Life to a whole nation." And D'Aubigne says, "The Reformation lay hid in that Bible."²

We have not the space here to produce a history of the Reformation, however interesting the subject might be. Our purpose in this chapter is to describe briefly the presence of true evangelical Christianity during the entire Christian era; and it appears in great prominence at this epoch of the Reformation.

While it was difficult for the reformers to free themselves entirely from the traditions in which they had been brought up, they nevertheless obtained a firm, experimental hold on God, which gave them spiritual satisfaction and power from on high. The burden of the message they preached was not a religion of works, of forms, and of ceremonies, but the salvation of the soul through the faith of Christ alone. Nothing can be more certain than the truth and the sincerity of their work on this point. Thus, Luther, before he found

2 History of the Reformation, Book II.

Christ, cried out: "How can I dare believe in the favor of God so long as there is no real *conversion*? I must be *changed* before he can receive me. Oh, my sin, my sin, my sin!" After he found the desire of his heart in the forgiveness of his sins, he said, "The Holy Spirit is no spirit of doubt, and he has *written in our hearts* a firm and peaceful assurance, which makes us as sure of the object of our faith as we are of our own experience."³ Again, he bears testimony in words still more emphatic: "I felt myself *born again*, as a new man; and I entered by an open door into the very paradise of God." That he appreciated his experience of salvation is shown by the high estimate he placed on its value, in the following words, which he said to Duke John of Saxony: "Let my life be found to bear fruit in the *conversion* of one man, and I shall willingly consent that all my books should perish."

The heart-experience described by Luther was possessed by others of the reformers also, a few of whom I will refer to, giving the quotations as given by Tefft under the heading, "Christianity in the Lutheran Age."

Melancthon, the sweet-spirited companion and fellowlaborer of Luther, certainly believed also

3 Ibid., Book XI.

in the work of heart-redemption; for he shows how a sinner may be saved, in the following language: "The apostle invites thee to contemplate at the Father's right hand, the Son of God, our great Mediator, ever living to make intercession for us; and he calls upon thee to believe assuredly that thy *sins are pardoned*, and thyself counted righteous, and accepted by the Father, for the sake of the Son, who died upon the cross."

This was the experience of Myconius also. It is related of him that he went to the indulgence-seller, Tetzl, to get his sins forgiven, but, not having the money required for the purchase of pardon, fell upon his knees, and cried out, "O God, since these men have refused remission of sins because I had no money to pay, do thou, Lord, take pity on me, and forgive them in mere mercy." The remainder of the story is told by himself. "I retired to my chamber. . . . I can not here put down what I experienced. I asked of God to be my Father, and to make me what he would have me. *I felt my nature changed, converted, transformed.* . . . To live with God, and to please him, became my most ardent, my sole desire in life."

The same thing was true also in France. Le-fevre, the distinguished professor of the Sorbonne, in Paris, describes the glory of his own

personal experience thus: "Oh, the unspeakable greatness of this exchange! The sinless One is condemned, and he who is guilty goes free; the Blessing bears the curse, and the cursed is brought into blessing; the Life dies, and the dead lives; the Glory is whelmed in darkness, and he who knew nothing but confusion of face is clothed with glory." This is certainly a beautiful description of heart-regeneration. Farel, Roussel, Arnaud, and others professed the same experience, and "Leclerc became a martyr, rather than deny his experience of it."

The work in Switzerland rested upon the same basis; for Zwingli, the founder of the Reformation in that country, was a converted man, and he preached regeneration. Tefft describes the work in Switzerland thus: "The gifted Farel came down from France to his [Zwingli's] assistance. All of Farel's family were converted. In Zurich, two thousand citizens professed regeneration; and similar scenes were enacted all over the Swiss republic. Preachers and revivals sprang up in every city."

In Scotland, John Knox thundered forth the truths of salvation.

Although Robert Brown had preached the truths of redemption, it was reserved for the eighteenth

century to witness the greatest moral and spiritual awakening that England ever had, under the preaching and the labors of the Wesleys. The experience of John Wesley can be set forth in a few words. He was a highly educated man and a minister, and he came on a missionary tour to America to convert the Indians. In a communication written at that time he says: "It is upward of two years since I left my native country in order to teach the Georgia Indians the *nature* of Christianity. But what have I learned myself in the mean time? Why, what I least suspected—that I, who went to America to convert others, was never converted myself." He began to seek earnestly for a heart-experience, and he expressed his desire in words thus: "I want that faith which no one hath without knowing that he hath it; for whosoever hath it is freed from sin, the whole body of sin is destroyed in him . . . having the love of God shed abroad in his heart, through the Holy Ghost which is given unto him, which Spirit itself beareth witness with his spirit that he is a child of God." Concerning his conversion, which took place after his return to England, on May 24, 1738, he says that he went to a meeting "where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before

nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strongly warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ—Christ alone—for salvation, and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins—even mine!—and saved me from the law of sin and death.” After his conversion he preached the gospel of full salvation for many years, and thousands of people obtained the experience. The influence of the Wesleyan revival was felt throughout the world. Numerous men scarcely less distinguished, who were associated with him in the movement, preached the Word of God in the most powerful manner that it had been proclaimed since the apostolic era. The hymns of Charles Wesley have not lost their soul-inspiring power until this day.

“Oh for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer’s praise;
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of his grace!

“My gracious Master and my God,
Assist me to proclaim,
To spread through all the earth abroad,
The honors of thy name.

“Jesus, the name that charms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease;
’Tis music to the sinner’s ears,
’Tis life, and health, and peace.

“He breaks the power of canceled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the vilest clean,
His blood availed for me.”

Viewing the early history of God's people in Protestantism, their illustrious teachers, and the thousands of followers who professed the salvation of Jesus—whether among the Lutherans in Germany, the followers of Zwingli in Switzerland, the Huguenots in France, the Covenanters in Scotland, the Puritans in England, or the Pilgrim Fathers in the new world—can we deny that the saving gospel of Christ has been preached as a witness to the nations on the scene of the conflict? Through this means the grand central truths of Christianity have been handed down to us in a continuous line, and today we rejoice in this glorious heritage of our fathers.

CHAPTER XV.

FALSE RELIGION.

Thus far in the present work we have had the pleasant task of describing the religion of the Bible—its origin, nature, and adaptation to, and general effects upon, mankind—but in order to view true Christianity in its proper historical setting, it is necessary for us to digress from the general subject long enough to pass under brief review the rise and development of that gigantic antichristian system which for ages largely usurped the place of the pure, spiritual religion instituted by our Lord and proclaimed by his holy apostles.

That such a power should arise was plainly predicted by Christ and his apostles. Jesus said: "Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." "And many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." Matt. 24: 4, 5, 11, 12. According to these sayings, the powers of wickedness and of deception would be marshaled under the name of Christianity. Peter also refers to the same fact

in these words: "But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of." 2 Pet. 2:1, 2.

The apostle Paul gives us a graphic description of Antichrist and his system in the following Scriptures, partially quoted heretofore: "Now we beseech you, brethren, . . . that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled . . . as that the day of Christ is at hand. . . . For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshiped; so that he as God sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. . . . For the mystery of iniquity doth already work; only he who now letteth will let until he be taken out of the way. And then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming; even him whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying won-

ders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness." 2 Thess. 2:1-12. "Now the Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils; speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron; forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving." 1 Tim. 4:1-3.

With such a description before us, it is hardly necessary to name the subject of this chapter; for only one professedly Christian power answering this delineation has arisen in the world since the apostolic days, and that is the great system commonly styled Roman Catholicism. A Catholic made this remark one time: "The Bible can not be true without Holy Mother of Rome." He wished to convey the idea that its authority proceeded from the pope. But a Protestant replied, "Very true; for as the Holy Bible has predicted the rise, power, and calamities of popery—if these

predictions had not been fully manifested in the actual existence and tremendous evils of popery, the Bible would have wanted the fulfilment of its prophecies, and therefore would not have been true!"¹ Dowling credits Professor Gaussen, of Geneva, with this terse statement: "In pointing to the pope, we point to a miracle which calls upon us to believe the Bible." The fact that popery has survived all the changes of time establishes the truth of the above declaration of Paul's, which not only gives its description, but also foretells its continuance until the second coming of Christ.

The rise and development of this system was gradual. The apostle stated that the "mystery of iniquity" was already working in his day, but there was a hindrance that retarded its progress. The seeds of apostasy from the primitive simplicity of Christianity were already sown, but the circumstances were not favorable for their germination and rapid growth. Heathen Rome stood ready to crush everything that passed under the name of Christianity, and therefore nothing but the genuine experience of salvation could fit people for the trying ordeal of persecution. So there was little opportunity for the development of a false Christianity; for the next persecution would

1 Dowling, *History of Romanism*, p. 27.

drive out the godless professors and bring the true into greater prominence, like gold tried in the fire. But as Christianity became more widespread and persecutions less severe, there was a gradual decline in the general religious experience of its professors, occasioned largely by the acquisition of numerous rites and ceremonies. We have already shown the natural tendency of human nature to incorporate into its religious creed objects of an extraneous character. This very disposition soon burdened the early church with a multitude of useless and senseless ceremonies and forms, and these deprived its members of that true spiritual relation and heart-communion which constitutes the essential element in the pure religion of Jesus. Thus, by degrees the primitive condition was changed, and the power of apostasy continued to gain ground rapidly. This transition is described as follows by the historian D'Aubigne:

“The doctrine of the church and the necessity of its visible unity, which began to gain ground in the third century, favored the pretensions of Rome. The church is, above all things, the assembly of ‘them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus’ (1 Cor. 1:2), ‘the assembly of the first-born which are written in heaven’ (Heb. 12:23) . . . The strong bond which originally united the members of the

church, was that living faith of the heart which connected them all with Christ as their common head. Different causes soon concurred to originate and develop the idea of a necessity for external union. Men accustomed to the political forms and associations of an earthly country, carried their views and habits into the spiritual and eternal kingdom of Christ. Persecution, powerless to destroy or even to shake this new community, made it only the more sensible of its own strength, and compressed it into a more compact body. To the errors that sprung up in the theosophic schools and in the various sects, was opposed the one and universal truth received from the apostles, and preserved in the church.

"This was well, so long as the invisible and spiritual church was identical with the visible and external church. But a great separation took place ere long; the form and the life became disunited. The semblance of an identical and exterior organization was gradually substituted for that interior and spiritual communion, which is the essence of the religion of God. Men forsook the precious perfume of faith, and bowed down before the empty vessel that had contained it. They sought other bonds of union, for faith in the heart no longer connected the members of the

church [of that church, we might say]; and they were united by means of bishops, archbishops, popes, mitres, canons, and ceremonies. The living church retiring gradually within the lonely sanctuary of a few solitary hearts, an external church was substituted in its place, and all its forms were declared to be of divine appointment. Salvation no longer flowing from the Word, which was henceforward put out of sight, the priests affirmed that it was conveyed by means of the forms they had themselves invented, and that none could obtain it except by these channels. None, said they, can by his own faith attain to everlasting life. Christ communicated to the apostles, and these to the bishops, the unction of the Holy Spirit; and this Spirit is to be procured only in that order of succession! Originally whoever possessed the Spirit of Jesus Christ was a member of the church; now the terms were inverted, and it was maintained that he only who was a member of the church could receive the Spirit.”¹

This change from the original standard and fundamental principles of the gospel effected, it was easy for the hierarchy to rise to greater heights of authority and to exercise the most absolute dominion over the consciences of men. The

1 History of the Reformation, Book I, Chap. 1.

church at Rome, being favorably situated in the capital of the empire, long enjoyed considerable distinction in the estimation of the churches of the West, and its bishop was not slow to take advantage of the confidence reposed in him, by employing every means possible to make the surrounding churches feel their dependence on the church of the capital. At the time of the Council of Nice (325 A. D.) we find that three cities—Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria—were already distinguished in this manner, and this led to their establishment as patriarchates. The Second General Council added Constantinople to the list, and Jerusalem was also included at a later date as an honorary patriarchate. Thus, the general church had five distinct heads, each of which exercised authority over all the surrounding provinces.

The Roman bishop, or patriarch, sought for preeminence over all of the other patriarchates, but this encroachment on their liberties was strongly resisted. But when the Mohammedan invasion overthrew Jerusalem, Antioch, and Alexandria, destroying their sees, only Rome and Constantinople were left; and when at a later date Constantinople declined and separated from the church of the West, Rome was left in undisputed

possession of the field. Before this latter event, however, a contest for supremacy characterized by the most bitter calumny had long existed between the bishops of Rome and of Constantinople. In the latter part of the sixth century John, bishop of Constantinople, assumed the title of Universal Bishop, and Gregory, the Roman bishop, incensed at this audacity of his rival, sought by every means to dissuade John from the use of such a designation. He invented the Roman fiction in regard to the power of the keys committed to Saint Peter and his successors in office, in order to confer as much dignity as possible upon his own position. He wrote to John denouncing the title of Universal Bishop as "vain," "blasphemous," "infernal," "diabolical," and "antichristian." He pleaded with him to renounce it. "Beware," said he, "of the sinful suggestions of the wicked. I beg, I entreat, and I beseech, with all possible suavity, that your brotherhood resist all these flatterers who offer you this name of error, and that you refuse to be designated by so foolish and so proud an appellation." Again, he said: "I am bold to say, that whoever adopts or affects the title of Universal Bishop has the pride and character of Antichrist, and is in some manner his forerunner in this haughty quality of elevating

himself above the rest of his order. And, indeed, both the one and the other seem to split upon the same rock; for as *pride makes Antichrist* strain his pretensions up to Godhead, so whoever is ambitious to be called the only or universal prelate, arrogates to himself a distinguished superiority, and rises, as it were, upon the ruins of the rest.”¹

This was the Roman bishop Gregory who has since been canonized. His successor in the bishopric, Boniface III., only two years after the death of Gregory, sought for this very “blasphemous” title of Universal Bishop. He applied to Phocas the emperor, who was of infamous character, having assassinated his predecessor in order to make room for his own accession. This cruel tyrant, disliking the bishop of Constantinople, forbade his using the assumed title, and then granted the request of Boniface, conferring upon the Roman bishop and his successors this title of Universal Bishop, which has been retained to this day. The Romanists claim infallibility for their popes, and therefore, accepting the doctrine of Gregory as unquestionably true, we shall have no trouble whatever in locating the Antichrist of whom Saint Paul speaks in his Second Thessalonian Epistle.

From the time that this “blasphemous title” was

¹ History of Romanism, pp. 53, 54.

conferred upon the pope of Rome, in A. D. 606, we may consider the real character of the papacy as definitely fixed. Its object was to gain more than a mere title; it sought for universal supremacy over all the affairs of men, temporal as well as spiritual. Succeeding popes endeavored by every means possible to augment their power and authority. The climax of usurpation was reached in Hildebrand, who ascended the papal throne under the title of Gregory VII. in 1073. This haughty pontiff had a lively dispute with Henry IV. of Germany, who had refused to recognize some of his innovations. The altercation terminated in the excommunication of Henry. So great was the influence of the pope over Henry's subjects that the emperor was shunned like a man accursed of heaven; and the only thing that Henry could do was to seek the pardon of the pope. For three days he stood barefooted in the snow of the court-yard of Gregory's palace at Canossa before the pontiff would grant him admission and the magnanimous privilege of kissing the toe of His Holiness! Pope Innocent III. also humbled King John of England by laying all England under an interdict. He even invited King Philip of France to invade and conquer England, offering him John's kingdom on the condition that he go over

and take it. Such examples, and scores of others too tedious to mention, show the true character of that "man of sin" professing to be the earthly representative of that meek and lowly Jesus who, "when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not." Surely in this we have no marks of the true religion of Jesus Christ.

And when we stop to consider the errors of Romanism, we find a strange mass of usages utterly foreign to the simple apostolic system. This also grew up by degrees. As early as the time of Tertullian, who was the first of the Latin Fathers, we find an extravagant praise of the virtues of celibacy. Soon second marriages were prohibited to the clergy, and then marriage after ordination was forbidden. These inhibitions led the way for the enforcement of a later decree enjoining celibacy. The idea of the special sanctity of virginity, as described by Chrysostom and others, led to the doctrine of the perpetual virginity of Mary, and thus originated the worship of the Virgin, the mother being honored more than the Son.

Another great error that found expression in the Romish system was Pelagianism. "Pelagius asserted that human nature is not fallen—that

there is no hereditary corruption, and that man, having received the power to do good, has only to will in order to perform. If good works consist only in external acts, Pelagius is right. But if we look to the motives whence these outward acts proceed, we find everywhere in man's nature selfishness, forgetfulness of God, pollution and impotency. The Pelagian doctrine, expelled by Augustine from the church when it had presented itself boldly, insinuated itself as demi-Pelagianism and under the mask of the Augustine forms of expression. This error spread with astonishing rapidity throughout Christendom. The danger of the doctrine was particularly manifested in this: that by placing goodness without, and not within, the heart, it set a great value on external actions, local observances, and penitential works. The more these principles were observed, the more righteous man became: by them heaven was gained; and soon the extravagant idea prevailed that there are men who have advanced in holiness beyond what was required of them."¹ This doctrine of the efficacy of good works led to the most extravagant notions, and men sought by external means to gain favor with God. Thus originated, in the Romish church, the practise of monkery. Anthony,

1 History of the Reformation, Book I, Chap. II.

Hilarion, Martin of Tours, and thousands of others, led the most ascetic lives.

Respect and reverence for the martyrs developed to the point of their being worshiped as saints. Everything that their sacred persons had touched was regarded with peculiar veneration as possessing some special sanctity; and thus originated that regard for relics which formed such a prominent feature of Romanism. Even the hands, and feet, and bones of the saints were carefully preserved in gold and silver boxes. This opened the way for all sorts of deception, and the incredulity of the people knew no bounds. Thus, "in the church of All Saints at Wittemberg was shown a fragment of Noah's ark, some soot from the furnace of the Three Children, a piece of wood from the cradle of Jesus Christ, some hair from the beard of Saint Christopher, and nineteen thousand other relics of greater or less value. At Schaffhausen was exhibited the breath of Saint Joseph that Nicodemus had received in his glove. In Wurtemberg you might meet a seller of indulgences, vending his merchandise, his head adorned with a large feather plucked from the wing of Saint Michael."¹

That the Romish church represented a system

1 History of the Reformation, Book I, Chap. 3.

of false religion is shown not only by its utter non-conformity to the teachings of the New Testament in the things already mentioned, but also by its assimilation of paganism. When the Roman empire was overrun time and again by barbarian conquerors, and finally subdued by them, the papists gladly yielded to the prejudices of the heathen, and incorporated into their worship and practises numerous pagan principles in order that they might win over these wild children of the North to the Romish religion. These half-savage invaders, in turn, were willing to exchange their heathen deities for the Romish ones and to honor the haughty Roman priesthood in place of those who had exercised a similar function in their own religions. This course had been preceded by similar concessions to the heathen already comprising the Roman empire, and thus was so-called Christianity almost completely paganized. We might refer to a few principles adopted from the Roman pagans.

1. The high priest of the pagan religions was called Pontifex Maximus, and he claimed spiritual and temporal authority over men. The pope of Rome borrowed the title, and made the same claims, even being clad in the same attire.

2. The heathen wore scapulars, medals, and im-

ages for personal protection. Romanists wear the same and for the same purpose.

3. Pagans, by an official process called *deification*, raised men to a dignified position and accorded them special honors and worship. Papists, by a similar process called *canonization*, exalt men after their death to the dignity of *saints* and offer up prayers to them.

4. Their adoration of idols and of images was borrowed direct from the heathen; for all such practises were absolutely forbidden by the Mosaic law and had no place in primitive Christianity.

5. Their religious orders of monks and nuns were also in imitation of the vestal virgins of antiquity.

The manner in which the Pantheon at Rome, and its idols, were reconsecrated for the use of the church shows clearly the heathen origin and nature of many of its practises. This old temple, which is still standing, was built by Herod Agrippa in 27 B. C. and dedicated to *all the gods*. Pope Boniface IV., about A. D. 610, reconsecrated it to "the blessed Virgin and all the saints." From that time until the present day Romanists in the same temple have prostrated themselves before the *very same images* and have devoutly implored them by the same forms of prayer and for the

very same purposes as did the heathen of old. The only difference is that they have changed the names of the idols.

Dowling says: "The scholar, familiar as he is with the classic descriptions of ancient mythology, when he directs his attention to the ceremonies of papal worship, can not avoid recognizing their close resemblance, if not their absolute identity. The temples of Jupiter, Diana, Venus, or Apollo, their 'altars smoking with incense,' their boys in sacred habits, holding the incense-box and attending upon the priests, their holy water at the entrance of the temples, with their *aspergilla*, or sprinkling-brushes, their *thuribula*, or vessels of incense, their ever-burning lamps before the statues of their deities, are irresistibly brought before his mind whenever he visits a Roman Catholic place of worship, and witnesses precisely the same things."¹ What a contrast with the simple and pure religion of primitive Christianity!

The low moral standard held by the Romish church during the period of her greatest power also proves her to be the repository, not of the true religion of Jesus, but of a false religion. We have seen that when Christianity was first intro-

¹ History of Romanism, pp. 109, 110.

duced during the period of flagrant immoralities among the Romans, the early Christians upheld the purest standard of morals in spite of all the licentious influences. And whenever any one fell a prey to the corrupting influences of society, he was rebuked by the apostles and ordered dismissed from the fellowship of the faithful. But how was it in Romanism? During the middle ages, the period of her greatest triumph, we find the most shocking immoralities manifested everywhere, and nowhere more than among the leaders of the church themselves. Pope Sergius III., through his unlawful association with Marozia, an infamous harlot, had a son named John. A vacancy in the papal office gave the ambition of Marozia, according to Mosheim, "an object worthy of its grasp, and accordingly she raised to the papal dignity John XI., who was the fruit of her lawless amours with one of the pretended successors of Saint Peter, whose adulterous commerce gave an *infallible* guide to the Roman church." John was the paramour of the harlot Theodora.

In Roderic Borgia, however, who ascended the papal throne under the title of Alexander VI., the lowest limits of depravity were reached. To quote the words of the historian Waddington: "The ecclesiastical records of fifteen centuries . . .

contain no name so loathsome, no crimes so foul as his. . . . Not one among the zealous annalists of the Roman church has breathed a whisper in his praise. . . . He publicly cohabited with a Roman matron named Vanozia, by whom he had five acknowledged children. Neither in his manners nor in his language did he affect any regard for morality or decency; and one of the earliest acts of his pontificate was to celebrate, with scandalous magnificence, in his own palace, the marriage of his daughter Lucretia. On one occasion this prodigy of vice gave a splendid entertainment, within the walls of the Vatican, to no less than fifty public prostitutes at once, and that in the presence of his daughter Lucretia, at which entertainment deeds of darkness were done over which decency must throw a veil; and yet this monster of vice was, according to papists . . . the Vicar of God upon earth, and was addressed by the title of His Holiness!"¹

The immorality of the regular clergy during this millennium of Romish rule was of a most flamboyant type. Denied the privilege of having wives, they resorted to concubinage, a practise that became very common; and the Council of Toledo, which was confirmed by Pope Leo, ordained that

1 Church History, pp. 511, 512.

a priest should not be condemned for this, provided he was content with one concubine. Many popish writers really exalted whoredom among the clergy above marriage. Among these writers may be mentioned, upon the authority of Dowling, Costerus, Pighius, Hosius. Campeggio went still further. "He represented a priest who became a husband, as committing a more grievous transgression than if he should keep many domestic harlots."

D'Aubigne, referring especially to the evil influences following the sale of indulgences, says: "The history of the age swarms with scandals. In many places, the people were delighted at seeing a priest keep a mistress, that the married women might be safe from his seductions. What humiliating scenes did the house of a pastor in those days present! The wretched man supported the woman and the children she had borne him with the tithes and offerings. . . . The mother, fearing to come to want if the priest should die, made provision against it beforehand, and robbed her own house. Her honor was lost. Her children were ever a living accusation against her. Despised by all, they plunged into quarrels and debauchery. Such was the family of the priest! . . . These were frightful scenes, by which the people knew how to profit. . . . In many places the

priest paid the bishop a regular tax for the woman with whom he lived, and for each child he had by her. A German bishop said publicly one day, at a great entertainment, that in one year eleven thousand priests had presented themselves to him for that purpose.”¹

The system of auricular confession, with its opportunities of priestly seduction of women, has probably done more to curse Romanism with immorality than has any other one thing. During the sixteenth century Pope Pius IV. instructed the Inquisition in Spain to inquire into the matter of priestly solicitation of women at confession, and he issued an edict requiring all those who had thus been approached to appear and give affidavit before notaries appointed for the purpose. In the city of Seville maids and matrons of every rank came in large numbers, many of them veiled through modesty. After twenty deputies had been thus employed for a period of one hundred and twenty days, and the end not being reached, the inquiry was stopped and the depositions consigned to oblivion. Such a course was only revealing the rottenness of the system. Saint Paul predicted that “forbidding to marry” would be one of the marks of that false religion to arise subsequent to his

1 History of the Reformation, Book I, Chap. 3.

day; and here we have it in the priesthood, with all its fearful results.

But the crowning proof that Romanism is not the religion of Jesus, but a false religion, is her attitude toward all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and walk before him in truth. For ages she has claimed the right to persecute and exterminate heretics, and by heretics she means all who disbelieve her doctrines. This principle has been declared by numerous provincial and national councils and by a number of general councils of the Romish church; for instance, the Second General Council of the Lateran (1139); the Third (1179) and Fourth (1215) General Councils of Lateran, and the Sixteenth General Council, held at Constance in 1414. The acts of these general councils were authoritative. Romish annalists and theologians, such as Thomas Aquinas and Cardinal Bellarmine, have declared the right of Rome to persecute and slay all who disagree with her. And this pernicious tenet has been carried out consistently in her history, as is shown by the numerous crusades made to exterminate the Waldenses, Albigenses, Vaudois, and others, who maintained a purer doctrine than Romanism. We have already referred to these medieval Christians, their opposition to the super-

stitutions of Romanism, and their attachment to the Word of God. For this loyalty to truth they suffered the most inhuman treatment and violent persecutions from the hands of the zealous papists.

When the crusading army attacked the city of Beziers, it was easily taken, and when the knights applied to the pope's legate, Arnold Amalric, to learn how to distinguish the Catholics from the heretics in the city, he replied, "Kill them all; the Lord will know well them that are his." Says Dowling: "Though the stated population of Beziers was not over fifteen thousand persons, yet the influx of the people from the surrounding districts, especially women and children, was so large, that not less than sixty thousand persons were in the city when it was taken, and in this vast number, *not one person was spared alive*. . . . Thousands were slain in the churches, and the blood of the martyred victims, slain by the *holy warriors*, drenched the very altars, and flowed in crimson torrents through the streets."

Menerbe was taken, and the captured Albigenes were commanded either to accept the Catholic faith or else to mount a huge pile of wood prepared for them. True to their God, all of them, men and women, took their places on the pile.

Thereupon the wood was ignited, and soon the whole mass was wrapped in one immense flame. Thus were one hundred and forty living persons reduced to ashes. Montford, the leader of the expedition, also took Lavaur after a hard resistance. What occurred then is thus recorded by the popish historian Petrus Vallensis: "Our pilgrims collected the innumerable heretics which the castle contained, and *burnt them with the utmost joy.*" In another place the same writer refers to an occasion on which the pilgrims seized near sixty heretics, and "*burned them with infinite joy.*"¹

The Sixteenth General Council, held at Constance in 1414, Pope Martin himself being present, condemned the reformers Huss and Jerome to be burned at the stake. The prelates prevailed on the Emperor Sigismund to violate the safe-conduct which he had given Huss, signed by his own hand, and in which he guaranteed the reformer a safe return to Bohemia. And their inhuman sentence was carried out. This same council condemned the writings of Wyclif, the translator of the English Bible, and *ordered his bones to be dug up and burned*, a sentence that was afterwards carried into effect. After lying in their

¹ Cited from History of Romanism, pp. 314, 315, 318, 319.

grave for forty years the remains of this pious man were reduced to ashes and thrown into the brook Swift.

We have not the space here to write another book of martyrs; we have merely referred to the subject to show that as Rome has in times past proved herself to be the violent foe of those who desired to worship God in Spirit and in truth, she has forfeited all claims to the religion of Jesus Christ. It has been estimated that fifty-five million people have suffered martyrdom at the hands of papal Rome. As the papists have always boasted of their infallibility and unchangeableness of doctrine, these same persecuting principles are still a part of their creed, although not enforced in these days as in the past. While in spirit and in doctrine the papacy as a system remains unchanged, it adapts itself to external conditions; so that the Romanism of the United States is not in appearance the Romanism of Italy and of Spain in the middle ages, nor the Romanism of Central and South America in more recent times.

We can not here give an extensive history of Romanism, for to do so properly would require a thousand pages; we have just taken a mere glance at some of its prominent features in order to show that the entire system is so utterly unlike

primitive Christianity as to be unworthy even of the name Christian. It should be ranked as anti-christian—a *false religion*. Some of our modern skeptics have sneeringly styled Christianity the foe of all progress. But it has not been true Christianity that has been hostile to enlightenment and universal advancement; it has been this false Christianity imposing itself upon the world as the religion of Jesus Christ and attempting to exercise supreme authority and dominion over the souls and minds of men. The true religion of Jesus finds its noblest examples, during the medieval period, in those very heretics that Rome sought so earnestly to destroy.

CHAPTER XVI.

MODERN CHRISTIANITY.

The Reformation of the sixteenth century introduced a new era in the history of Christianity. For ages the world had lain under a dark cloud of superstition and error, a period during which the dominion of the hierarchy was complete. But the dawn of a new and better day was heralded by Wyclif, "the morning star of the Reformation," who produced the first English translation of the entire Bible. And John Huss, the Bohemian reformer, whom D'Aubigne styles "the John Baptist of the Reformation," preceded Luther about a century, and appealed powerfully to the Word of God, losing his life as a result, through the instigation of popish tyrants at the Council of Constance.

With the advent of Luther, however, the time was ripe for the seed of gospel truth to be sown again. During the long reign of false religion true evangelical Christianity had almost died out. The Bible was a book almost unknown to the common people, and even many of the clergy had never read it. Ignorance prevailed. "The Bishop of Dunfield congratulated himself on having never learned Greek or Hebrew." One of the monks

declared: "The New Testament is a book full of serpents and thorns," and, "Greek is a new and recently invented language, and we must be upon our guard against it." Thomas Linacer, "a learned and celebrated ecclesiastic, had never read the New Testament." D'Aubigne records these instances.¹ Only a few copies of the Bible were in existence, and these were generally kept in some secluded place, carefully chained. While Luther was in the convent, he found his greatest consolation in pouring over the sacred pages of one of these chained Bibles.

In the Reformation true Christianity reappears publicly after the lapse of many centuries. While Romanism retained a few Christian doctrines, which continued to exercise some influence for good in the world, still the vital element of heart-regeneration was lacking in the system, and religion was to the Romanists a mass of ceremonies and forms void of all spirituality. Such is not Christianity at all in the true Bible sense. And while we find some traces of the divine religion among the so-called heretics of the middle ages, we discover it only in the almost inaccessible mountain fastnesses, in the valleys of Piedmont, or in other by-places of the earth. The reform-

1 History of the Reformation, Book I, Chap. 3.

ers, however, boldly took their stand against the papal hierarchy and brought the Bible forward as the Word of Life for sinful men. After Luther obtained the experience of conversion himself and became a real Christian, he preached justification by faith, and the doctrine was embraced by thousands of people. From that time until the present day there have not been wanting multitudes of men and women who possessed the experience of Bible salvation.

It could hardly be expected, though, that the entire system of truth as revealed in primitive times should be restored to the world at once. As we have before shown, advancement must of necessity be gradual on account of the limitations of humanity. Now, ignorance and superstition had for ages exercised such complete control over the masses that we may feel safe in saying that at the Reformation period mankind was in an infantile state so far as all spiritual enlightenment was concerned, and therefore required a course of instruction gradually leading upward to the greater heights of Christian truth. So much of superstition and of error remained that time was required in order to divest Christianity of the many objectionable features associated with her. The infusion of new life into the body would lead eventu-

ally to the casting off of effete matter, the rejection of all devitalized material.

But while the reformers revolted from the Roman church and declared their independence, they possessed no adequate idea of the principle of general or religious liberty; and instead of taking their places together as pupils in the school of Christ, and sitting humbly at the feet of their Master to receive the full instruction of his Word, they brought with them from Romanism that spirit of intolerance which refused to allow in others the weight of personal conviction in accordance with the individual light received. So we find the Roman spirit of dogmatism manifested everywhere in their ironclad logic, human subtleties, and carefully formulated creeds. The natural result of such a condition could not be different from that shown by the subsequent history of the facts—Christendom became divided into various camps, each party possessed of a fierce sectarian spirit which despised or ignored all others, and which led in some cases even to the persecution of those entertaining different opinions. That such a state of affairs ever existed is a matter of regret; for this circumstance has perhaps done more to injure the cause of Christianity in modern times than has any other one thing.

We can not here give a history of Protestantism, so we will just refer briefly to some of its features. As a general thing, each new religious movement in Protestantism contained less of the old superstitions and ceremonial forms, and was characterized by a greater development of truth. This was true of them in their initial stage. But it is also a fact that whenever these advanced movements became well established and increased in numbers, they declined in spirituality, and their worship became more ritualistic in character. This, in turn, gave occasion for the introduction of another new movement. But while the religious history of this period consists of a series of oscillations, we must bear in mind the strong positive element of Christianity that existed all the way through. Hundreds of ministers have proclaimed the saving truths of the gospel, and have placed Jesus Christ before the people as the world's only hope, as the Author of all redemption. Countless multitudes of people have availed themselves of the light of truth and have obtained the experience of heart-regeneration. But, on the other hand, much of error has remained in the prominent teaching of all the Protestant sects, and this, combined with a spirit of worldliness, which seems to have taken possession of each

movement when it became well established and popular, has done much to bring about a general coldness and formality in all the Protestant world. And while the spirit of intolerance and of dogmatism has become considerably modified with the lapse of time, there has been no less of sect-making; on the contrary, the external divisions among Christians have become more numerous with every passing century.

Taking the history of Protestantism as a whole, we see that it is evidently a decided advance from the conditions of Romanism that preceded it, and we are thankful for the upward evolution since the barbarian deluge of the dark ages; but when we return to the Bible for an account of the works of Christianity in the primitive days, we readily see that Protestantism has not brought about that state of Christian unity which was such a prominent feature of apostolic Christianity and which was lost in the great apostasy following. In fact, a return to the early standard in every way would require the complete revision of Protestantism as it now exists; for primitive Christianity was not made up of numerous humanly organized bodies of believers existing separately, but was composed of one body only, which included all the true Christians on earth. This great

body of believers was called "the church of God." While its various members met together in local congregations or assemblies for divine worship, there existed a general fellowship and intercourse between all of these local churches. In other words, the apostolic Christian system included both spiritual unity and visible, external unity. Now, Protestantism has restored to the world neither a highly developed form of spiritual unity nor any substantial external unity. It may in some cases present a cold, formal unionism, with the profession of spiritual fellowship; but that blessed experience of having the hearts "knit together in love," as in apostolic days, is sadly wanting.

Since the days of religious intolerance and oppression in early Protestantism, the adopting of human creeds and the forming of sects has been one of the chief barriers to true Christian unity. If the ministers of righteousness had been content to preach and practise as doctrine only what they found clearly revealed in the Bible, they would have taught a heart-experience of full salvation, which would have bound the hearts of all true Christians together in one bond of fellowship, and they *would not* have divided the people into independent religious bodies. Although among the

early Christians, as we have seen, every shade of religious enlightenment existed, still there was no occasion for carnal divisions, but all were able to live together harmoniously in peace, unity, and happiness. And when some Judaistic teachers not very far advanced in Christian truth sought to bind some of the precepts of Moses' law on the Gentile disciples, the brethren met together at Jerusalem to consider the matter, not for the purpose of dividing into separate camps, but with the intention of adjusting the differences peaceably; and harmony was effected by the making of some concessions on both sides. Now, if the Christians had always maintained this humble attitude of brotherhood, there is no reason why their unity should not have remained unbroken. Over and over again the New Testament writers exhorted them to "keep the unity of the Spirit in the bonds of peace," and warned them repeatedly against those who caused divisions and offenses contrary to the one glorious doctrine they had received.

A semblance of this unity was maintained, it is true, in the Romish church; but it was not the natural, spontaneous unity of the Spirit working in the souls of men, but was a coercive union. From the time of the Council of Nice an external

form of unity was enforced by the hierarchy, and during the dark ages every dissenting opinion was crushed by terrible anathemas or smothered by persecutions. During this reign of papal usurpation that church which presumptuously arrogates to itself the title of Catholic, or universal, church, presented an appearance of oneness; but this was only the enslavement of superstition and of ignorance, and not that genuine unity of the Spirit of God which binds the hearts together in Christian love and leads souls onward to greater heights of development and of enlightenment. And while Protestantism delivered the Bible to the people and opened the way for the individual uniting of the soul with God, independently of priestly functions and of all human mediators, it failed to connect the people in substantial unity with each other. On the contrary, it erected barriers that separated them farther, and thus robbed Christianity in modern times of one of its mighty secrets of power and success in the primitive period.

This feature of Protestantism, which differentiates it from the primitive church, has been discussed by many able writers, who have sought for some means to correct existing conditions. Dr. Lyman Abbott, writing on the subject of "The Evolution of the Church," deplores the present

state of affairs in the ecclesiastical world, and expresses a strong desire for a return to the primitive standard of church unity. This great lack in Protestantism is so well expressed by him that I take the liberty of making rather a lengthy quotation from his work.

"Protestantism . . . did not make Jesus Christ, as a personal and living Master, its center, nor has it been content to make simple loyalty to him the only condition of membership and the only bond of union. In lieu thereof it offers three substitutes. The Reformed churches propose a creed; they recur from Roman imperialism to Greek philosophy; the church, from being an army, becomes a school of philosophy. The Anglicans affirm an apostolical succession; they recur to Judaism; and propose, as the bond uniting their churches in an organism, a spiritualized survival of the Aaronic priesthood. Finally, the Independents abolish church unity altogether; and for a planetary system substitute a universe of wandering comets. . . . But the problem of church unity remains still unsolved. The church of today is still a composite. . . . Its life is the life of Christ, but its organization is still Pagan, Jewish, or a composite of the two. The organization of the church of Rome is a survival of Cæsarism; that of An-

glicanism is a survival of Judaism; that of the Reformed or Presbyterian churches is a survival of Greek schools of philosophy; and that of the Independents or Congregationalists is a survival of Teutonic individualism.

“What of the future? How shall the unsolved problem of church unity be solved? Not by going back to papal imperialism. There is, indeed, no danger to American civilization in the papal church. The Inquisition will never be revived. It belongs not to the church, but to a barbarism which Christianity has already conquered. But the papal church is neither our model nor our goal. It is a strange amalgam. Its bloodless sacrifice of the Mass, its Eternal City, its pope and priesthood, are relics of the sacrificial and hierarchical system of Judaism. Its mediatorial theology, its intercession of saints and angels, its adoration of images, and its absolutism in government are relics of Roman paganism. . . .

“Nor will church unity be secured by accepting, as the final word of God’s providence, Presbyterianism. The creed is not the center of the church; loyalty to the creed is not the bond of union. The intellect is divisive. Creeds are not intended to unite men, but to separate them. From the Nicene Creed down to the last creed of Congregation-

alism, there is not one which had not for its prime object the exclusion of certain classes of men from the organization which adopted the creed as its platform. The Nicene Creed was framed to exclude the Arians; the Decrees of the Council of Trent were framed to exclude Protestants; the Westminster Confession of Faith was framed to exclude Arminians; the Episcopal Thirty-nine Articles were framed to exclude Roman Catholics and Independents; and the latest creed of Congregationalism was framed to exclude Unitarians and Universalists. The church which adopts a creed as its center, and loyalty to a creed as its bond of union, is a school of philosophy. Its assumed function is to teach a system, not to proclaim a person.

“Nor does Episcopacy answer the unanswered problem of church unity. The bishops of the Episcopal church propose four conditions of Christian union—the Bible, the Nicene Creed, the two sacraments, and the historic Episcopacy. The first two conditions are Protestant, a revival of Greek philosophy; the second two conditions are Roman and Jewish, a revival of semi-imperial hierarchy. But the church is a circle, not an ellipse; with one center, not with two foci. That center is loyalty to Christ alone. It is not loyalty to a Book, though

the book gives us information concerning the Christ; it is not loyalty to a creed, though the creed may admirably express the opinion of a noble age concerning the Christ; it is not loyalty to an organization or hierarchy, though that organization or hierarchy may be admirably adapted to do the work of the Christ; and it is not loyalty to ceremonials, few or many, though they may be splendid and useful symbols of the spiritual life.

“Nor are we to abandon the problem of church unity altogether, and substitute for the church of Christ an aggregation of individual and independent assemblies. If the papacy is a survival of Roman imperialism, Presbyterianism of Greek philosophical schools, and Episcopacy of a Judaic hierarchy, Independency is a survival of Teutonic individualism; as essentially incongruous with the ideal toward which all churches should set their face as is either of its sister systems. *The church of Christ, as Christ and the apostles depicted it, is an organic thing, with a unity, an organic life, a historical continuity.* When the apostle declares that the church is the bride of the Lamb, it is not a Solomon’s harem he has in mind. When he declares that the church is the body in which God tabernacles, he is not thinking of a number of *disjecta membra*. The river of God is not meant

to separate into multitudinous streams as it nears the sea, like the Nile at the Delta. We do not all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man in Christ, by splitting up into warring sects with polemical creeds and pugilistic piety. The glory of God in his church is not best seen by breaking it up into bits, each with its own peculiar shape and peculiar color, tumbled promiscuously together and showing a new pattern with every turn of the kaleidoscope. The church described in the New Testament is a tree, rooted and grounded in Christ; a body, Christ the head; a household, Christ the Father; a kingdom, Christ the king. The true church of Christ is one; but the unity of the church lies in the future. We shall not come to it until we recognize that loyalty to Christ—the historic Christ, the risen and living Christ—is the sole condition of union, and in that union is absolute liberty of thought, of worship, and of action. Christ the only pope, Christ the only creed, they who possess Christ's spirit the only apostolical succession, and all who are in Christ one, because they are in him, and are doing his work."¹

The religion of Jesus Christ is the only religion

1 The Evolution of Christianity, pp. 167-172.

that meets the requirements of man, and nothing short of its complete development can permanently satisfy the wants of the soul. The great decline in primitive Christianity was largely brought about, as we have observed, by the assimilating of paganism—by the substitution of an external, formal religion for that internal, spiritual religion that proceeded from God. Human nature could not bear this yoke forever. It sought for direct communion with its God. The result was a step upward in progress, a return to the Bible, which produced the Reformation. And since the Bible has become the Word of Life to the nations again, it is evident that its principles will gradually produce actual effects in the elevation of society and a return to the original standard of Christianity. A greater amount of apostolic truth has been brought forth by succeeding reformations, and the outlook is encouraging for still greater results.

The truth can not remain silent; it must speak; and when its voice is heard speaking “as never man spake,” millions are ready to yield obedience to the heavenly mandate. Already the trumpet of God is heard sounding forth truth in advance of the general standard of Protestantism. Another reformation is at hand. God is now calling

his people together in unity as in apostolic days—not upon the narrow basis of a single sect, but upon the broad platform of all truth, independent of every sect. The true Christians of every denomination properly belong to this movement. When they hear the voice of Christ calling them into Bible unity, they willingly obey; they are glad to step out from or to take away the barriers that have separated them from the brethren and sisters outside of their narrow limits. It is reasonable to suppose that if Christ should come in person to preach the gospel on earth at the present day, he would not identify himself with any existing sect, but would set up truth as an independent standard and invite all men to forsake their divisions and be united in him alone. Such is Bible unity—the kind that existed before Christian denominationalism arose. The experience of Christ in the soul and life alone constitutes a man a true Christian; and when all who have obtained this internal experience learn to ignore all other bonds of union, the Bible standard of Christian fellowship and unity will be universally realized.

Perfect unity was effected in the apostolic times by the preaching of Christ alone and by the forsaking of every independent position in order

to unite with each other in him. Even the widely separated Jew and Gentile were unified in Christ by this means. The apostle Paul says with reference to them: "But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who hath *made both one*, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us. . . . That he might reconcile both unto God IN ONE BODY by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby. . . . For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father. Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God; and are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone; in whom all the building *fitly framed together* groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: in whom ye also *are builded together* for an habitation of God through the Spirit." Eph. 2:13-22.

" 'Twas sung by the poets, foreseen in the Spirit,
A time of refreshing is near;
When creeds and divisions would fall to demerit,
And saints in sweet union appear.

"Oh, glory to Jesus! We hail the bright day,
And high on our banners salvation display,
The mists of confusion are passing away."

CHAPTER XVII.

THE PERFECT STATE.

We have shown the origin and the nature of the religion of the Bible, and have briefly traced its progress during the long weary centuries. We now draw near the final scene of this great religious drama—the grand climax of all the preceding acts. The spiritual works of God, like his operations in nature, move slowly, but stately. The Author of the plan of redemption is not limited by time; for with him “one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.” After the lapse of centuries, during which preparatory steps had been taken, Christ appeared and proclaimed the gospel of full salvation. But this was only one part of the great redemption scheme. It restored man to the moral image of his Creator and brought happiness and peace to the soul here in time, but it left for the future the revelation and the fulfilment of that part of the original plan which comprehends man’s complete development, and immortality in a perfect, glorified state hereafter. “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we

shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is."

1 John 3:2.

We have before shown that while Christianity foreshadows some ideal standards, its practical application is calculated to elevate mankind by degrees. But in the very nature of things it is improbable that this world in its present state should ever witness the complete revelation of God's plan relative to redeemed humanity. Sin originally drove man out of paradise, and it seems that man's sin has since driven paradise out of the world. We have the promise, however, that when the new heaven and the new earth shall have been brought to view in our future state, we shall again "have right to the tree of life and enter in through the gates into the city." Our present condition is only a preparatory one, and those who "do his commandments" here in this time-world shall have an abundant entrance into the future and everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

In all ages of the world men have clung to the doctrine of personal immortality. The greatest names in philosophy are subscribed to its support—Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Cicero, Descartes, Bacon, Locke, Leibnitz, Kant, and Hamilton. And all the millions of earth, with a very few ex-

ceptions, have been strong in the belief of a life after death. Whence proceeded this universal sentiment, this all-controlling conviction? Is this shadow of future existence projected by a substantial reality? We reply that it is. Man has never been able to avoid the divine presence nor to escape the conviction that he is to be held accountable to a higher power in a world to come. Man is conscious of powers in himself that bear no proportionate relation to the few short years of his earthly pilgrimage, of capabilities unmeasured that require an eternity for development. No other earth-born creature possesses these longings for future existence nor is even capable of reflecting on a life hereafter.

It would seem that the justice of God requires a future state for man. We observe many vile sinners enjoying the highest degree of prosperity in this world down to the very hour of their death-bed scenes; while, on the other hand, thousands of righteous men have been buffeted, and slandered, and oppressed, and persecuted—ground down under the cruel heels of earth's oppressors—and have finally made their exit from life unrewarded, perhaps yielding up their souls to God on the torturous rack or in the devouring flames of martyrdom. If there be no hereafter, where, we ask,

is the justice in this? where any reward for the righteous? The apostle Paul says, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." 1 Cor. 15:19. No; we can not rid ourselves of the belief that righteousness will be rewarded and injustice punished hereafter.

This doctrine of future accountability exercises the greatest controlling power over the conduct of men here on earth. All the laws ever produced by human legislation have not done as much to deter men from the commission of crime as has this one universal conviction. Without a higher conception of right than mere human laws, man may feel that he can dodge the executive officers, and his conscience will give him but little trouble; but with the assurance that all of his deeds, though hidden from man, are "naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do," and that he must "give account thereof in the day of judgment," he experiences a restraining influence not otherwise possible. Human laws are largely prohibitory. They grant but few rewards. If a man profits in this world, he must succeed by his own efforts; and, then, there is no assurance of future rewards given by them, without which mankind lacks one of the strongest incentives to just and right living.

How dreary the prospects of those solitary individuals who have no inspiring hope of future existence! The light of life is eclipsed in darkness, the measured poetry of earthly existence turns into a jargon of confusion, and all the exquisite harmonies of this life burst into a melancholy minor wail. Trembling with fear, their spirits cry out, "Where am I going? Where?" and echo mocks them with the question, "*Where?*" They try to satisfy their souls by answering themselves—"Nowhere." All is uncertainty, all is dark. Says Ingersoll: "We can not say whether death is a *wall*, or a *door*; the *beginning* or the *ending* of a day; the spreading of pinions to soar, or the folding forever of wings; whether it is the *rising* or the *setting* of the sun, or an *endless life* that brings rapture and love to every one: *we do not know—we can not say!*"

Thank God! the Bible does not leave us to float around in such a sea of doubt and uncertainty. "*For we know* that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, *we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*" 2 Cor. 5:1. The Word of God answers the universal longing of humanity by "bringing life and immortality to light through the gospel," and thus illuminating our pathway and guid-

ing us unerringly into the world beyond, with the clearest promises of a future life and of everlasting reward. Listen to the Scriptures: "Ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance." Heb. 10:34. "The hope which is laid up for you in heaven." Col. 1:5. "Lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven." Matt. 6:20. "Great is your reward in heaven." Matt. 5:12. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you." 1 Pet. 1:3, 4. "The Lord will deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom." 2 Tim. 4:18.

It is this doctrine of future rewards that has charmed the hearts of many weary pilgrims on their journey homeward. It is this belief that has inspired constancy and fortitude in thousands of saints who have suffered every indignity for the cause of Christ. The apostle Paul says, "Bonds and afflictions abide me; but none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy." "I press toward the mark for the prize of the high

calling of God in Christ Jesus." Acts 20:24 and Phil. 3:14. This was true even of Jesus, "*who for the joy that was set before him* endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Heb. 12:2. This is the grand conviction that has illuminated the last earthly scene of millions of departed saints. Listen to their dying testimonies in all the ages:

Gilbert Haven: "There is no death. There is no river. I am surrounded by angels. I am floating away, away. Glory! Victory through the blood of the Lamb!"

John Powson: "My death-bed is a bed of roses."

Jerome of Prague: "This soul in flames I offer, Christ, to thee."

Thomas Scott: "This is heaven begun."

Richard Baxter: "Almost well."

Samuel Spring: "Oh! let me be gone; I long to be at home."

John Wesley: "The best of all is, God is with us."

Cotton Mather: "My last enemy has come; or rather, I should say, my best friend."

Melancthon: "Nothing else but heaven."

Neander: "I am going to sleep now—good night."

Edward Payson: "I float in a sea of glory."

Cranmer in martyrdom: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Robert Newton: "I am going to glory."

Elizabeth Rowe: "Eternity! How transporting the sound!"

Toplady: "The sky is clear; there are no clouds."

Mrs. Fletcher: "I am drawing near to glory."

John Bradford: "If there be any way of going to heaven on horseback, or in a fiery chariot, it is this."

Harvey, English preacher and author: "Precious salvation."

Dr. Bateman: "What glory! The angels are waiting for me."

Stephen: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit."

Wilbur Fisk, who died in his chair: "From a chair to a throne!"

Risden Darracott: "I am going from weeping friends to congratulating angels and rejoicing saints."

Florence Foster: "A pilgrim in the valley, but the mountain-tops are all agleam from peak to peak."

Zwingli: "They can slay only the body, not the soul."

Alexander Mather: "The Lord who has taken care of me fifty years will not cast me off now. Glory be to God and to the Lamb!"

Locke, the profound philosopher and Christian: "In perfect charity with all men and in sincere communion with the church of Christ."

John Fletcher: "Oh, how this soul of mine longs to be gone, like a bird out of his cage, to the realms of bliss!"

Alfred Cookman: "I am sweeping through the gates, washed in the blood of the Lamb."

Paul: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

"The Father hath received
Their latest living breath;
And vain is Satan's boast
Of victory in death.

"Still, still, though dead, they speak,
And trumpet-tongued, proclaim,
To many an awakening land,
The one availing Name."

—Martin Luther.

What a glorious exit from life! "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be

like his." Contrast these scenes with the death-bed agonies and exclamations of those who were unprepared and of those who had rejected the religion of the Bible.

Queen Elizabeth: "All my possessions for a moment of time."

Cardinal Mazarin: "O my poor soul, whither wilt thou go?"

Voltaire, the famous French infidel, once received a letter from a friend, in which this friend asserted that he had found out for sure that there is no hell. Voltaire replied: "I congratulate you; I am not so fortunate as you are." In his last days this infidel signed a recantation of his skeptical opinions and asked that the sacraments of the church be administered to him.

Thomas Paine, after spending his life reviling our holy religion, called loudly upon Jesus Christ for mercy in his dying moments, but at intervals uttered the most horrible curses.

Hobbes, the English infidel, dying, cried, "I am taking a fearful leap into the dark."

Altмонт: "O thou blasphemed but most indulgent Lord God, hell itself is a refuge if it hide me from thy frown." How terrible such an exit from this world!

But the Bible promises God's people more than

a mere life after death. It gives the most positive assurance of personal immortality in a bodily resurrection at the last day. The old patriarch Job found consolation in this fact during his severe affliction, and he declares: "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin worms destroy this body, *yet in my flesh shall I see God*: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another; though my reins be consumed within me." Job. 19: 25-27.

This glorious resurrection is a part of the great redemption plan. In the Edenic fall man not only lost the image of righteousness and holiness, and became corrupted by sin, but also lost the privilege of bodily immortality, and ever since he has been barred from the tree of life and left under sentence of death, in consequence of which he returns to the dust of the earth. But the plan of redemption both comprehends his perfect restoration to the standard from which he departed, and gives him access again to all other privileges and rights of sonship which, although not yet experienced, he forfeited by that primeval act of disobedience. However, the redemption scheme, as we have shown, has been necessarily revealed to

mankind gradually, and this phase of the original design is yet future. But what God has already done for the moral restoration of a lost world gives us the blessed assurance that he will not fail to fulfil, in his own time, every promise of his Word. "I have spoken it, I will also bring it to pass." Isa. 46:11. Let us show by the Scriptures that bodily immortality is a part of our redemption inheritance.

"That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ. In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, *which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession*, unto the praise of his glory." Eph. 1:12-14. According to this Scripture, we who are believers in Christ receive the Holy Spirit of promise as an "earnest"—pledge or assurance—"of our inheritance *until the redemption of the purchased possession.*" Now, what is this "purchased possession" that is to be redeemed in the future? The same apostle answers in another place: "Know ye not that *your body* is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? *For ye are bought with a*

price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Cor. 6:19, 20. This is clear. The spirit, or soul, is now saved and restored to the image of God, and the body is also "bought," or "purchased," by the same price, and is reserved for immortality at the appearing of "the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body." Phil. 3:21. Thus, the entire man is included in the system of redemption.

Again, the apostle says: "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. . . . For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the first-fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within our selves, *waiting* for the adoption, to wit, *the redemption of our body.*" Rom. 8:18-23. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." John 3:2. Though the new-birth state in this world constitutes us spiritual sons of the Almighty, yet in another sense, as stated by the apostle, our bodily renewal at the resurrection is

an "adoption" and "manifestation of the sons of God." Or, as Christ said, we "are the children of God, *being the children of the resurrection.*" Luke 20: 36. Sons of God in a twofold sense!

In another place the apostle Paul, under the figure of a house and its occupant, describes our present condition and the future change for which we wait. "For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven. . . . For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life. Now he that hath wrought us for the selfsame thing is God, who also hath given us the earnest of the Spirit." 2 Cor. 5: 1-5.

The time and the manner of this physical change from mortality to immortality, in fulfilment of the redemption plan, are described in the fifteenth chapter of First Corinthians. "For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order: Christ the first-fruits; afterward

they that are Christ's at his coming." "For the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory." Vers. 21-23, 52-54.

But the plan of God goes still further than merely to provide for our redemption, soul and body. Through sin man also forfeited forever his residence in the primitive garden, and this world, staggering under the weight of its sins, is no longer fit for the paradise of God. The redemption plan, therefore, provides for our transfer to heaven as our future and eternal home. Jesus says: "In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. *I go to prepare a place for you.* And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and *receive you unto myself*; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14: 2, 3. Where did he go? "He was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." Luke 24: 51. When will he come again to receive us? "The Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a

shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and *so shall we ever be with the Lord.*" 1 Thess. 4:16, 17.

In the mind and purpose of God the redemption plan was perfect and complete from the beginning, but in point of actual fulfilment it is drawn out over the course of ages. In the book of Revelation we read of the "Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." Chap. 13:8. In reality, however, the "Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" did not appear and suffer death until after the lapse of centuries. So, also, this other part of the redemption scheme, the part relative to our future and eternal home, was complete from the beginning; and we read, therefore, of "the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matt. 25:34. Yet thousands of years later we hear Christ saying: "I go to prepare a place for you," and, "I will come again and receive you unto myself." This final abode of the righteous will not be made manifest until the second coming of Christ. Let us turn to some clear texts of Scripture bearing on this point.

Says the apostle Peter: "But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up. . . . Nevertheless we, according to his promise, *look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*" 2 Pet. 3:10, 13. The Revelator describes the final judgment-scene, and says, "The earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them." Chap. 20:11. Then he goes on to say, "And I saw a *new heaven and a new earth*: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea." Chap. 21:1. This new earth will be our eternal home. "For here have we no continuing city, *but we seek one to come.*" Heb. 13:14. "Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city." Rev. 22:14.

With the immortalization of our bodies and the destruction of the earth, everything of a temporal nature pertaining to time passes way, and we have a blessed introduction to THE PERFECT STATE. This is the grand event looked forward to by the apostle Paul when he said: "Whether

there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But *when that which is PERFECT is come*, then that which is in part shall be done away. . . . For now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." 1 Cor. 13:8-12.

We have seen the gradual evolution of the re-redemptive plan, which has been saving believers and exalting the nations; in this greatest of all earthly events we shall witness its infinite climax, while the new creation resounds with the anthems of angels and the shouts of rejoicing saints. Day of all days! Joy of all joys! Happiness supreme! In all that chorus of universal harmony there will not be one discordant note, for "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." Released from the narrow confines of mortality, we shall rise to the sublime conception of things infinite and eternal.

Have we labored and fought unceasingly for the cause of Christ? We shall then lay down our armor and be at rest. What a transition!—from things temporal to things eternal; from sinful surroundings to righteousness and happiness; from

low to high; from darkness to light; from poverty to riches; from sadness to joy; from ignorance to knowledge; *from earth to heaven; from burden-bearing to reigning on a throne!* Plato's Ideal Republic and Sir Thomas Moore's Utopia bear no comparison with this PERFECT STATE. Have we worn out our lives in a sinful, oppressive world, while standing for the Christian doctrine of social equality? We shall witness its perfection in that perfect state, for all of God's created intelligences will occupy the same plane. "For they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world . . . are *equal unto the angels.*" Luke 20:35, 36. Have the sorrows of life pressed in upon us until, with eyes suffused with tears and mortal bodies racked with the hot pains of earthly diseases, we sighed for deliverance? In that happy world "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more . . . crying; neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away." Rev. 21:4. Have we stood by the bedside of our loved ones and, with hearts broken and bleeding, watched the cruel hand of death take them from our midst? The shadow of this monster shall never fall on the fair scenery of our bright beyond, for "there shall be no more death."

“A few more days, a few more years,
To tell the Redeemer’s story;
A few more crosses, and a few more tears—
Then away to our home in glory.”

But while we look forward and long for the splendors of that unending day, let us remember that the heavenly light is already falling upon us. The “Sun of righteousness” has arisen already and has gladdened the hearts of millions of earth’s toiling mortals. But, as Lorimer says, “the zenith has not been reached; it is not high noon yet. Already his celestial rays, falling on the horrible brood of superstitions engendered by weary years of mud and slime, have inflicted on them a mortal wound, as in the legend the burning shafts of the god of day destroyed the pernicious offspring of many-folded Python. Already the mists and vapors, born of the turbid seas of human error, and which once obscured the heavens, he has dispersed, and faintly at least the gates of the Holy City can be seen. Already the clouds of suffering are transfused by his love, and the silver lining can be discovered, prophetic of the hour when every shadow shall cease to fall on human lives. Even now his burning splendor melts the sunless heart, gently opens the sleeping eyes of childhood to the high concerns of an eternal scene, and calls the weary pilgrim to the blessed song of hope. But

by and by he who is shining more and more shall bring THE PERFECT DAY, and then the weeping that endures for the night shall cease, and joy, endless, world-wide joy, shall come with the eternal morning."

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